

Planning Considerations for Private Boarding
Houses: A case study approach in Auckland
and Dunedin, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Private boarding houses in New Zealand exist in multiple social and planning contexts, and house a variety of tenants, often with a high level of need and vulnerability. They fulfil a need by providing affordable single room occupancy accommodation, however international research suggests that the boarding house living environment can have detrimental outcomes for some tenants. Presently there is minimal regulation of boarding houses in New Zealand compared to many other developed countries and there are concerns in some quarters about the living environment. Allegations of substandard conditions and exploitation of tenants have come to the attention of social service organisations and the media. These concerns have been acknowledged at central and local government level, but planning and regulatory changes to address them have been slow in coming.

This research identifies problems and issues that characterise private boarding houses in the case study areas of Dunedin and Auckland, and examines how they are being addressed through planning and regulation. A Qualitative methodology has been employed for this study. The main sources of data for the research were obtained through interviews with key informants, supported by a literature review.

The primary research from this study validates much of what was uncovered in international literature on boarding houses. Among the residents of this accommodation type, there can be a high proportion of consumers of mental health services, people with addictions, former prisoners and people with a range of vulnerabilities. Boarding houses tend to exist at the lower end of the rental market and some premises operate in breach of regulations such as, building, fire safety and environmental health standards.

The research findings showed some contrasting trends between boarding houses in the Auckland and Dunedin case study areas, most significantly, the implications of Auckland's buoyant housing market compared to the stable housing market conditions of Dunedin. The Research in Auckland suggests that boarding house tenants there have fewer accommodation choices, and are more likely to live in unsafe, unsanitary and overcrowded conditions than those in Dunedin. The findings from this research inform a range of recommendations for addressing the issues that can arise from boarding houses.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Research suggests that the living environment of private boarding houses can have detrimental outcomes for tenants, and potentially for wider communities. Boarding houses in New Zealand offer an affordable accommodation option for a variety of tenants, and often house people with a high level of need and vulnerability. Historically they provided a cheap and flexible form of single person tenancy for predominantly male residents. Much changed during the 1980s and 1990s with a substantial deinstitutionalisation of the New Zealand mental health system (Day, 2004; Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). The closure of large mental health facilities and the integration of people in their care into communities created a demand for semi-permanent, single room accommodation. While some facilities with supported accommodation were provided, many mental health service consumers moved into private boarding houses, without formal support structures (Baxter, 1996; Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). Other vulnerable boarding house tenants include, released prisoners, those with alcohol and drug dependencies, and women and children.

Boarding house premises come in many different forms and standards are variable. Identifiable problems with some boarding houses in New Zealand include unsafe buildings, inadequate facilities, overcrowding, safety concerns for residents, and social isolation (Aspinall, 2013). Allegations of substandard conditions and exploitation of tenants by landlords have abounded in New Zealand media, particularly in Auckland (Amore, 2009). There have been questions raised over whether issues arising from the private sector boarding houses are being adequately addressed through government policy, legislation and local government provisions, and there is a growing impetus for change. In spite of this, policy in this area continues to be a blunt tool that has failed to bring about meaningful change. Conversely, there is another side to this argument which is associated with the housing preferences and social well-being of tenants. Boarding houses fulfil a need and some research suggests they can provide quality of life advantages for some tenants (Horan *et al.*, 2001). The problems and issues associated with boarding houses, and the drive for regulation need to be balanced with tenant

perspectives on accommodation choice, the need for provision of short term and single room tenancies, and the absence of suitable alternatives.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Boarding houses present challenges for planners and regulators that have not always been dealt with appropriately. Despite the issues that arise from boarding houses, they fulfil an accommodation need for often marginalised tenants with limited accommodation choices. Planners and regulators need to maintain a delicate balance between enabling boarding houses to operate as an affordable form of accommodation, while ensuring the living environment is sound.

The purpose of this study is to identify problems and issues that characterise private boarding houses in New Zealand, and to examine how they are being addressed through, and through central government legislation and local authority plans and policies. In identifying these issues, and reviewing the current regulatory framework, planning and regulatory solutions that could be incorporated into practice are sought. Due to the complexity of some of the issues associated with boarding houses, consideration is also given to non-regulatory solutions.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The focus of this thesis is informal and private boarding houses. Primary research was carried out in two separate case study areas, the cities of Auckland and Dunedin. Secondary research encompasses international literature specific to boarding houses and the key themes associated with them. The scope of the study does not include supported accommodation run by agencies and social services, as these are managed under individual rules and protocols subject to the specific needs of clients under their care.

For the purposes of the thesis, the definition of ‘boarding house’ is consistent with the *Residential Tenancy’s Act 1986* definition. ‘Boarding house’ and ‘boarding house tenancy’ are defined under section 66B of the Act as:

Boarding house means residential premises—

(a) containing 1 or more boarding rooms along with facilities for communal use by the tenants of the boarding house; and

(b) Occupied, or intended by the landlord to be occupied, by at least 6 tenants at any one time

And;

Boarding house tenancy means a residential tenancy in a boarding house—

(a) that is intended to, or that does in fact, last for 28 days or more; and

(b) under which the tenant is granted exclusive rights to occupy particular sleeping quarters in the boarding house, and has the right to the shared use of the facilities of the boarding house

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

This research seeks to identify issues and inform solutions by answering four main research questions. Each question represents an important aspect of the research required to achieve the purpose of the study. The research question has been formulated into a research objectives.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What issues and problems characterise New Zealand boarding houses?
2. How are boarding houses being provided for under the existing planning framework?
3. What regulatory changes could be made to improve the way in which boarding houses are provided for?
4. What non-regulatory options could be considered to improve the way that boarding houses are provided for?

The first question is resolved through a review of international literature, and through qualitative information obtained from a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants using open-ended questions. The key informants involved in this study include, boarding house tenants, landlords, social service workers, regulatory staff and planners. Responses to this question can be divided into two broad categories of themes, boarding house tenants and the living environment.

The second question is addressed by reviewing legislation, policy and plans relating to boarding houses in the context chapter, and by eliciting the professional opinions of key informants through interviews. In answering the third research question, the key

informants' opinions are sought on planning solutions to the issues identified. Finally, the fourth question seeks to identify non-regulatory solutions on the basis of suggestions from the key informants.

The Research Objectives are as follows:

1. To identify problems arising from the living environment of private boarding houses, in Dunedin and Auckland.
2. To determine how private boarding houses are being provided for under existing planning framework.
3. To identify possible regulatory changes that could improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.
4. To identify possible non-regulatory measures to improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.

1.5 THESIS STRUCTURE

This chapter defines and provides a background to the research area and introduces the research questions and objectives of this study. The introduction also describes the scope of the study and outlines the basic structure of this thesis.

Chapter Two is the literature review, and provides the theoretical framework for the research. The literature review explores the background and origins of boarding houses, internationally and in New Zealand. It assesses the impact of changes to the sector, particularly the deinstitutionalisation of mental health services. The literature review identifies key themes that inform the research design and the manner in which the results of this research are presented.

Chapter Three is the methodology, and it outlines the research methods. The primary research in this study is conducted in a qualitative manner through semi-structured interviews with key informants and through a survey of boarding house tenants. This chapter outlines the research design and the underlying theoretical perspectives upon which the research is based.

Chapter Four provides the research context for this study. The context examines boarding houses in New Zealand to provide a localised perspective. It describes unique aspects of the geography and demographics of the communities within the Dunedin and Auckland case study areas.

Chapter Five is the results section which outlines the findings of the research. The qualitative data is structured in a manner that links it to the research questions and seeks to achieve the key objectives of the study.

Chapter Six is the discussion. In this chapter the findings are analysed and discussed based on the research questions and the objectives of the study. Conclusions are drawn on the findings related to each of the research questions and comparisons are made between the findings of the primary research and the theoretical framework. Finally, recommendations are formulated for both regulatory and non-regulatory changes that could lead to improvements in the manner in which boarding houses are provided for and managed within the Dunedin and Auckland case study areas locations, and in New Zealand generally.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Private boarding houses play an important role in providing affordable single room accommodation throughout many parts of the world, particularly in expensive inner-city areas. However, they are often occupied by a spectrum of marginalised tenants and characterised by problems and issues. Boarding houses, and other accommodation types with shared facilities can carry with them a poor reputation and are often considered an undesirable form of housing. Changes such as the deinstitutionalisation of mental health services, and housing market reform are altering the role of boarding houses in many parts of the world. Drake (2013, p.3) in describing the assumed role of private boarding houses, suggested:

The role is significant as it interfaces and intersects with, and arguably often replaces, the disability and mental health service systems, homeless services and the public and private rental markets.

This chapter endeavours to characterise boarding house tenants, the private boarding house environment, and the planning and regulatory frameworks in which they operate. The literature review is intended to inform the research in this study by identifying current problems and issues, and evaluating how they have been addressed through regulation. It draws on relevant literature from New Zealand, as well as numerous studies from abroad covering multiple academic disciplines. The extent of notable issues in this area of study is exemplified by the range of academic disciplines encompassing the literature on boarding houses. The fields of social work, public health, sociology, criminology, psychology, public policy, geography and planning have all made significant contributions to research on boarding houses. A number of international parallels are drawn from the literature, with many of the same problems and issues occurring in different contexts around the world. The implications of deinstitutionalisation of mental health services, homelessness, physical health concerns, gender issues and the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners feature prominently in literature on boarding houses.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIVATE BOARDING HOUSE TENANTS

This section describes the characteristics of boarding house tenants, and the implications of them living in the boarding house environment. The majority of studies on boarding houses identify problems and issues associated with some of those who live in them. Foley (2009, p.9) states; “*The client profile brings with it an array of other issues, such as mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, disability and poor health.*” The issues facing marginalised boarding house tenants can be multifaceted and interrelated, for example problems with mental health can be exacerbated by addiction or vice versa. Due to their particular vulnerabilities, boarding house tenants often have limited housing choices, and are therefore susceptible to the exploitation of the market. This is particularly so for those that are single, as they may lack access to the accommodation subsidies and services that people living in family units can obtain, and can lack family support (Foley, 2009). Boarding houses can offer informal welfare support that some residents would otherwise be deprived of, and a ‘safety net’ for residents who could otherwise be living without shelter (Chamberlain, 2012a). While the widespread perception of boarding houses may suggest that they are a temporary form of accommodation, tenants often have a different perspective, and view them as a permanent home (Drake, 2014).

In New Zealand, prior to a 2010 amendment, the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*, gave no recognition to boarding house tenancies. Hence, boarding house residents were not afforded the same protections and rights of those in the rental housing sector. While boarding house tenancies are now recognised explicitly in the Act, tenants do not have the same protections from eviction or landlord exploitation as renters in the housing sector. The placement of many residents in boarding houses is facilitated by agencies and community-based organisations. There is a general acknowledgement that the boarding house environment is not ideally suited to the needs of many, however referrals to boarding houses by service providers are sometimes necessary due to a lack of alternatives (Baxter, 1996; Drake, 2013; Foley, 2009).

2.2.1 Tenants with Mental Illness and the Implications of Deinstitutionalisation

People living with mental illness are among the most numerous, and vulnerable of boarding house tenants. Mental health services throughout the developed world have adopted policies of deinstitutionalisation, involving the transfer of care settings from

hospitals and institutions towards community-based care. Over the last 40 years this process has had enormous repercussions for not only service consumers, but also the communities that they live in (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998; Kearns & Joseph, 2000; Schiff, Schiff & Schneider, 2010). Kearns and Joseph (2000, p.159), suggest:

The re-placing of mental health care into the community has often involved separation of residential treatment issues, to the detriment of the communities, institutions and (especially) individual involved

Deinstitutionalisation of psychiatric services in New Zealand began in the 1970s, following major reviews of psychiatric services, and concerns about the pit-falls of overly paternalistic, institutionalised settings (Day, 2004). The ongoing process of deinstitutionalisation led to an influx of mental health service consumers into boarding houses in New Zealand cities, changing the nature of the tenant base for many premises (Kearns & Joseph, 2000).

Research suggests that the quality of housing is of vital importance to the effectiveness of long-term treatment for people living with mental illness (Browne & Courtney, 2005; Day, 2004). Treatment and rehabilitation of an individual can be ineffective if their standard of housing is poor. The problems that mental health service consumers experience with health and wellbeing are exacerbated by transience and poor living conditions (Baxter, 1996; Browne & Courtney, 2004; Day, 2004). Not only is the level of recorded psychological distress higher in boarding house residents, evidence suggests that people with mental illness living in a boarding house environment are more reluctant to seek help than those living in other housing environments (Whittington & Deane, 2011).

As the mental health services in New Zealand were deinstitutionalised, the resources and support networks of the service consumers failed to follow them into the communities that they were integrated into (Baxter, 1996). The timing of deinstitutionalisation coincided with welfare and housing reforms that created further barriers to the provision of accommodation for people living with mental illness (Kearns & Joseph, 2000). At the outset of deinstitutionalisation, private boarding houses became a common accommodation option for mental health service consumers as they were integrated into the community (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998; Horan *et al.*, 2001).

Boarding houses were required to adapt from a predominantly working male tenant base, to one that incorporated the complex needs and vulnerabilities of mental health service consumers. Integration initially occurred with more controls and support, nevertheless in most developed counties the predominant trend has been a movement towards the use of private sector housing (Schiff, Schiff & Schneider, 2010). In some situations many of the controls and restrictions of institutions were also imposed on those living with mental illness in private boarding houses. Schiff, Schiff & Schneider, (2010, p.111) stated:

Transitioning from highly supervised living arrangements to semi-independent ones retained many of the coercive features of institutional treatment and was geared towards meeting the needs of providers for custody and control rather than that of those diagnosed with a mental illness for independence and freedom of choice.

People living with mental illness have complex individual needs, and a homogeneous approach to the delivery of their accommodation needs is impractical (Schiff, Schiff & Schneider, 2010). The requirement to evaluate the impacts of deinstitutionalisation on service users and communities spawned a wide body of research from multiple disciplines, with many studies critical of the process. Research suggests that boarding houses are among the least suitable living environments for mental health service consumers living in the community (Browne & Courtney, 2005). Horan *et al.* (2001, p.324) wrote:

The consensus from research suggests that few positive changes occurred for most seriously mentally ill patients. Most individuals remained poor, isolated from mainstream social life and unhappy.

Horan *et al.* (2001), in a comparative quality of life study contradicts some commonly held misconceptions around the housing preferences of the mentally ill, suggesting that mental health service consumers living in boarding houses expressed a higher quality of life than those living in supported hostel accommodation. Boarding houses offer more anonymity in neighbourhoods, allowing tenants to escape some of the stigma of mental illness (Horan *et al.*, 2001). Tenants that are more accepted in their communities are generally happier (Browne & Courtney, 2005; Horan *et al.*, 2001). Boarding houses can offer better privacy and personal space, and allow greater independence in tasks such as meal preparation than supported accommodation. Overall, boarding house tenants with

mental illness reported greater life satisfaction across a range of criteria including more financial security and less victimisation (Horan *et al.*, 2001). According to Horan *et al.* (2001, p.236); *A person with a severe mental illness may be living in what appears to be sub-standard housing, but may express satisfaction with this living arrangement.* Browne & Courtney (2004) unexpectedly found that people living with schizophrenia in boarding houses had no more symptoms of mental illness than those living in their own homes. However, there can be other less favourable factors associated with boarding house life for example, greater risk of conflict and violence, and fewer opportunities for employment and recreation (Browne & Courtney, 2005).

2.2.2 Homelessness and Transience

Homelessness is a complex issue that tends to affect people with complex and multifaceted needs (Deane, 2012). Achieving lasting solutions to homelessness can be difficult as, intervention through legislation, plans or by agencies can only push back so far against market forces and the profit motives of landlords (Gallagher & Grove, 2007). Research suggests that homelessness exacerbates other issues and problems that people have, for example, mental illness, substance abuse, health problems and criminal behaviour (Collins, 2010; Polcin & Henderson, 2008). Gallagher & Gove (2007), suggest that privately run boarding houses in Australia are increasingly being used by agencies as a last resort placement for the homeless, representing a move towards a de-facto privatisation of social services. Prevention is considered an important step in reducing homelessness, however few policies are focused primarily on prevention (Culhane, Metraux & Byrne, 2011). The focus tends to be on those that are already homeless rather than those at the margins who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Defining homelessness is difficult, and policy in this area in New Zealand has been complicated by conflicting and overlapping definitions. There are further challenges in accurately counting the number of homeless, as many people will decline to identify themselves as homeless (Jansen, 2015). Homelessness beyond people actually living without shelter, or in emergency accommodation is less visible and consequently gets less attention, a matter that can constrain preventative initiatives for addressing homelessness (Collins, 2010; Jansen, 2015). Policy makers in New Zealand and abroad now incorporate broader definitions of homelessness. Statistics New Zealand defines homelessness as:

Homelessness is defined as living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing: are without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household or living in uninhabitable housing (Statistics New Zealand, 2015d)

Accordingly, many boarding house residents can be defined as being homeless on the basis that they reside in accommodation that is temporary, or at least intended to be temporary given the short-term tenure agreements they are subject to (Jansen, 2015; Severinsen, 2010).

Australian researchers and policy makers apply a hierarchical model to define homelessness developed by Chamberlin and Mackenzie (1992). Baldry *et al.*, (2006, p.23) outlined these categories of homelessness as; ‘primary’, referring to living “without conventional shelter”, ‘secondary’ as “transient accommodation” and ‘tertiary’ as “medium to long-term accommodation, but without the security of a lease.” In the context of Australian boarding houses, secondary homelessness is defined as staying for 12 weeks or less, while tertiary homelessness includes those staying 13 weeks or more (Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 1992; Chamberlain, 2012b). Chamberlain (2005, p.5) adds a further dimension to the definition of homelessness by suggesting:

Homelessness has to be grounded in objective community standards about the minimum accommodation that people need if they want to live in accordance with widely recognised cultural standards.

Notwithstanding these broadened definitions, there can be a reluctance on the part of boarding house tenants to identify themselves as homeless (Baldry *et al.*, 2006). Despite the short term nature of boarding house lease agreements, many tenants choose to live in boarding houses for long periods of time (Deane *et al.*, 2012).

The benefits of housing the homeless extend beyond satisfying their immediate need for shelter. Once people are established in a stable housing environment other issues can be dealt with far more effectively (Collins, 2010). Housing policy in the North America has been subject to a recent paradigm shift. There is now a focus on the ‘Housing First’ model, where finding stable housing is considered the first step in the long-term treatment of people with mental illness, addictions, or other conditions (Polcin & Henderson, 2008). This is contrasted with the more traditional ‘Continuum’ model, where service providers are required to maintain contact with their clients as they cycle through stages

of homelessness and various forms of temporary housing (Polcin & Henderson, 2008; Sayed, 2012; Waegemakers Schiff & Rook, 2012).

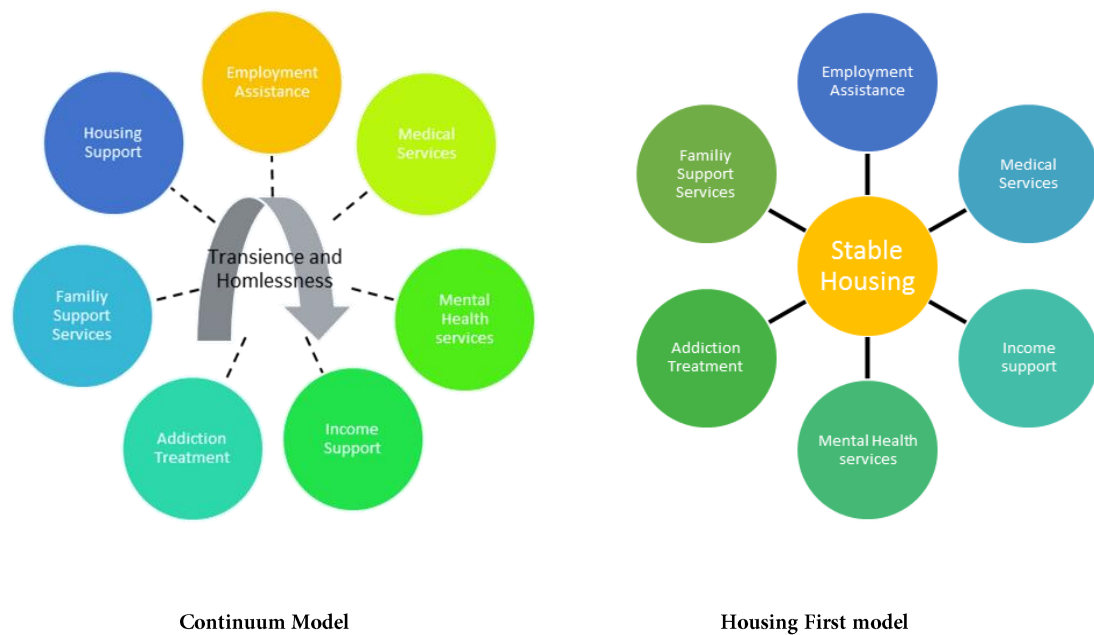


Figure 1: Comparison of Housing First and Continuum models

Figure 1 above, denotes recent paradigm changes that prioritise a stable housing environment as being advantageous to efficient service delivery. The diagram to the left demonstrates a ‘Housing First’ model where stable housing enables the efficient delivery of services, compared to the ‘continuum’ model on the right. Emerging paradigms, such as ‘Housing First’ bring into question the suitability of boarding house accommodation for people requiring treatment for addiction or mental illness, particularly in circumstances where there are other alternatives available (Waegemakers Schiff & Rook, 2012).

Policy approaches to dealing with homelessness in New Zealand have tended to be disjointed, with policy created across a number of government departments, local authorities and non-governmental organisations (Laurenson & Collins, 2007). The absence of a clear central government policy on homelessness has led to inconsistent policy approaches at lower levels as explained by Jansen (2015):

Without coordination and commitment at the central governmental level, lines of responsibility for homelessness remain unclear and hinder the development of a coordinated approach to addressing homelessness in New Zealand.

The role of the welfare state in the provision of public housing has resulted in homelessness being far less visible in New Zealand than many other developed nations, however it has also contributed to a lack of recognition of homelessness in policy (Collins, 2010). Previously, the New Zealand Government has taken a punitive stance on homelessness through the provision of vagrancy laws (Laurenson & Collins, 2007). While vagrancy laws have now been removed, Laurenson & Collins (2007) have identified situations where local authority measures, such as camping bans and bylaws have impacted on the homeless. Such measures can compound issues faced by the homeless by displacing them from their established support networks (Laurenson & Collins, 2007). Homelessness in New Zealand has noticeable demographic trends, for example it disproportionately affects Māori (Jansen, 2015).

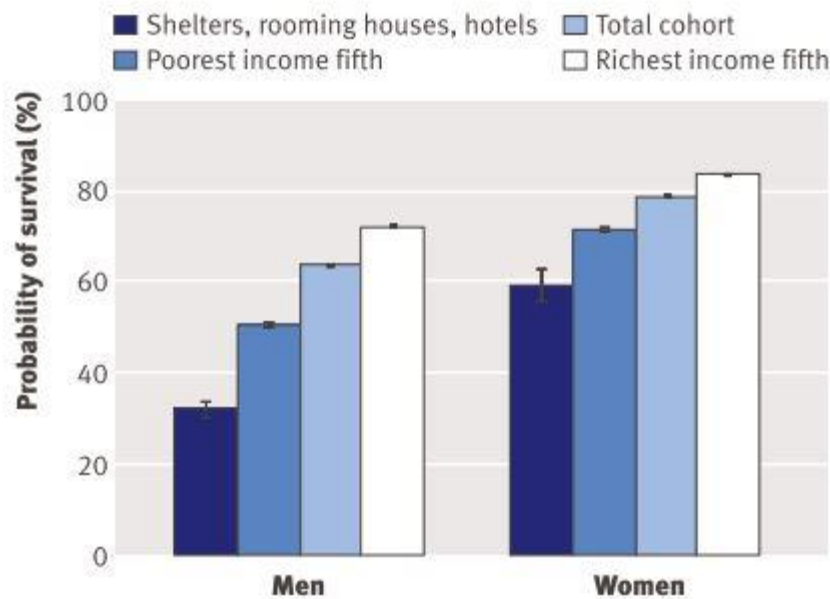
2.2.3 Physical Health Implications for Boarding House Tenants

Research suggests strong statistical links between improved housing and improved physical health (Aspinall, 2013; Badcock, 2014; Hwang *et al.*, 2003). Hwang *et al.* (2003) acknowledges the high rate of health problems in boarding house residents, but suggests that establishing direct links between accommodation standards and health is complex. For example, there may be a need for people suffering from ill health to live in a particular area close to services and networks, and people with poor physical or mental health may have less ability to exercise choice over their accommodation (Hwang *et al.*, 2009). Interestingly research has suggested that there are also links between the aesthetic appearance of a boarding house and the health of residents, and a tendency for those with poorer health to reside in more dilapidated buildings (Hwang *et al.*, 2003).

According to a Canadian study, Hwang *et al.* (2003), residents living in single room occupancy accommodation with shared facilities were shown to have statistically much poorer health than not only the general population, but also the low-income population. It has been suggested that the poor living conditions that typify many forms of collective housing are a clear indicator of poor health, and this relationship can occur irrespective of other factors such as income level (Aspinall, 2013; Hwang *et al.*, 2003; Hwang *et al.*, 2009). Hwang *et al.* (2009), established that the rate of mortality in boarding houses is significantly higher for both genders than the mortality rate for the general population. There is also a higher mortality rate among boarding house residents than lower income

populations living in more stable forms of housing. According to Hwang *et al.* (2009, p.6):

“The probability that a 25 year old living in shelters, rooming houses, or hotels would survive to age 75 was only 32% for men and 60% for women compared with 51% and 72% respectively, in the lowest income fifth.”



(Huang, 2009)

Figure 2: Probability of survival to age 75, conditional to survival to age 25

Figure 2 above, presents the findings of Hwang (2009), in relation to mortality among the residents of boarding houses and similar forms of accommodation in Canada. Hwang (2009, p.1) suggested that in order to address high rates of mortality in these accommodation forms, there is a need for increased interventions around “*smoking, alcohol, drugs, mental disorders and suicide among other causes.*”

2.2.4 Addiction

Alcohol and drug addiction imposes significant social and economic costs on societies through the demands they impose on health systems and relatives (Palepu *et al.*, 2013). Internationally treatment facilities for alcohol, drug and substance abuse can be limited, and there remains a shortage of treatment programmes and appropriate supported accommodation in most developed countries (Polcin & Henderson, 2008). As a consequence, private boarding houses are often a default residential option for many

people afflicted by addictions. In poorly supervised boarding houses, the mixing of residents can exacerbate addiction problems (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008). Unstable living environments are a significant marker for increased substance use, which can be attributed to a coping mechanism to stressful and depressing circumstances, and as a way of fitting into a subculture where drug and alcohol use is prevalent (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008). Research suggests that homelessness, transience and addiction can be complexly interwoven, and it is difficult to assess the extent to which each factor influences the other (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008; Palepu *et al.*, 2013). In examining this relationship, Johnson and Chamberlin (2008, p.342) suggests; *“There is a common perception that substance abuse and homelessness are linked, but there is considerable contention about the direction of the relationship”*. Johnson and Chamberlin (2008), in a study on substance abuse among the homeless population of Melbourne, which included boarding house residents, found that the majority of problem substance abusers had developed their addictions after becoming homeless.

2.2.5 Women in boarding houses

Research suggests that the number of women residing in boarding houses in North America and Australia is increasing (Grace, Malone & Murphy, 2015; Mifflin & Wilton, 2005), although there are no accurate statistics available for New Zealand. Women can be particularly vulnerable in a boarding house environment, as is demonstrated by Baxter (1996, p.2):

Due to both their (comparative) physical weakness and to the specific characteristics of gender roles it is women who are most likely to be victimised within a community under stress. Therefore it is considered necessary to apply a gendered focus and analysis of the boarding house experience.

Baxter (1996) suggests that there can be negative stigma attached to women living in a boarding house environment, while men living in the same situation are considered to be merely ‘down on their luck.’ Prevailing expectations of the appropriate living environment for women are often associated with suburban living, domestication and attachment to family, and these are expectations that female boarding house tenants do not often conform to. Government policy directed at the provision of social housing in New Zealand has often excluded single women (Baxter, 1996). Traditionally social housing policy has been focused on providing accommodation for families. Women

without family connections can be left to consider accommodation alternatives such as boarding houses (Baxter, 1996).

When exposed to violence and abuse, women living in boarding houses have fewer opportunities to seek out safe and secure environments, and this can contribute to a heightened sense of fear (Attard & Price-Kelly, 2010; Baxter, 1996). A woman's use of space can be restricted by fear to a greater extent than is the case with men. The use of shared spaces such as bathrooms, kitchens, laundries and living areas within a boarding house environment can evoke fear in women (Attard & Price-Kelly 2010; Baxter, 1996; Grace, Malone & Murphy, 2015; Mifflin & Wilton, 2005). The boarding house living environment can be poorly suited to the needs of women, yet in many circumstances there can be a lack of alternatives, as demonstrated by Baxter (1996, p.33):

Whilst there exists a general consensus amongst health and welfare professionals that the abuse of women in boarding houses is widespread, they all agree that a lack of resources and alternatives renders any intervention impotent.

Women can have difficulty forming positive relationships in boarding house environments, at least in part because they tend to be in the minority (Mifflin & Wilton, 2005). They are likely to feel threatened by some male residents, particularly those susceptible to drug and alcohol use (Attard & Price-Kelly, 2010; Baxter, 1996; Mifflin & Wilton, 2005). An inability to form positive relationships within the boarding house environment can lead to further social isolation and marginalisation (Mifflin & Wilton, 2005). Grace Malone and Murphy (2015) researched a programme called 'WAND', in women only boarding houses operated by the YWCA in Australia. The programme includes education and initiatives to get residents to engage with each other to foster a sense of community. It demonstrates the benefits of community-run boarding houses, and the improved outcomes for women that come from organised programmes. Attard & Price-Kelly (2010) also supports specific education problems for women to develop skills to cope with life in a boarding houses, and to improve awareness of their rights.

2.2.6 Families in Boarding Houses

The plight of families living in boarding houses and other transient accommodation forms is a matter that has had limited academic attention, both internationally (Flatau *et al.*, 2013; Spinney, Hulse & Kolar, 2010) and in New Zealand. Spinney, Hulse & Kolar (2010), and Flatau (2013) are Australian studies that address the plight of families living

in homeless and transient circumstances, and both refer to families domiciled in boarding houses. According to Spinney, Hulse & Kolar (2010), homelessness in families can be triggered by changes in family relationships, such as the disruption cause by family violence, but it is more likely to occur because of difficulties in accessing the rental housing market. For children experiencing homelessness there is an increased likelihood that they will experience emotional problems, behavioural difficulties and lowered levels of academic achievement (Spinney, Hulse & Kolar, 2010). Flatau (2013) identifies links between children experiencing homelessness and problems later in life including, violence, and alcohol and drug use. The amount of social financial support available to homeless families varies considerably and is dependent on available resources, yet research suggests that these problems can manifest themselves regardless of the level of support (Spinney, Hulse & Kolar, 2010). In reference to a study of homeless and temporarily housed families in Australia, Spinney, Hulse & Kolar (2010 p.40), eludes to the difficulties imposed on parents caring for children in a single room accommodation with shared facilities:

They had lost the right to have their pets and belongings around them, could not prepare the food they wished their children to eat, and were sometimes accommodated alongside those they felt uncomfortable with.

Other impacts on families becoming homeless include loss of privacy, possessions and pets. Uncertainty over accommodation imposes difficulties for families in planning for such things as schooling, childcare and employment (Spinney, Hulse & Kolar, 2010).

2.2.7 Implications for Released Prisoners in Boarding Houses

Private Boarding houses are commonly accessed by released prisoners as accommodation, yet research suggests that, due to their particular vulnerabilities, the boarding house environment can be poorly suited to their needs, and detrimental to rehabilitation (Baldry, 2002). The provision of adequate housing is an important factor in the successful reintegration of prisoners into the community (Baldry *et al.*, 2006). Characteristically, ex-prisoners are less likely than the general population to live in a stable housing tenure situation and are considerably more likely to be homeless or living in a short term accommodation, such as boarding houses (Baldry, 2002). Problems with the provision of suitable housing for ex-prisoners can be exacerbated by a lack of social

housing, a poorly regulated private rental market, and a scarcity of affordable housing (Baldry *et al.*, 2006).

Baldry (2002) identifies a need for a flexibility in housing types that addresses varied needs, but considered boarding houses with shared facilities to be among the least suitable options for released prisoners. Self-contained less institutional accommodation is considered more favourable for rehabilitation, although an oversight of structured support is still required for ex-prisoners with a high level of need (Baldry, 2002). Ex-prisoners without agency support were more likely to re-offend than those that maintained the support of agencies post-release (Baldry *et al.*, 2006). Baldry *et al.*, (2006) alluded to a lack of pre-release planning, and a lack of inter-agency coordination as often being factors in ex-prisoners being poorly housed; *“Close coordination among agencies and a greater variety of housing types with support, not just ex-prisoner hostels, are required to address post-release housing problems”* (Baldry *et al.*, 2006, p. 22). Vulnerable subgroups of ex-prisoners, such as women with children, and those with mental or intellectual disabilities can have even more difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodation than the general population of released prisoners (Baldry, 2002; Baldry *et al.*, 2006). Research suggests that increased alcohol and drug use among ex-prisoners are factors associated with low-standard accommodation and insecure tenure (Baldry *et al.*, 2006).

2.2.8 Summary

This section covered key themes associated with boarding house tenants that are identified in literature. There is considerable variation in the characteristics of boarding house tenants, although research focuses heavily on the traits of the vulnerable and marginalised. Mental illness, homelessness and transience, poor physical health, addiction, and released prisoners feature prominently as tenant characteristics in the literature on boarding houses. Attention is also given to the plight of women and to a lesser extent, families in boarding houses. The vulnerability factors associated with boarding house tenants seldom occur in isolation, but are multifaceted, interrelated and can be exacerbated by the boarding house living environment described in the next section.

2.3 THE BOARDING HOUSE ENVIRONMENT

This section defines and characterises boarding houses, the boarding house environment, and issues and problems that arise from this environment. Firstly, boarding houses in New Zealand are defined and this definition is placed in the context of how these forms of accommodation are defined internationally. The geography and spatial distribution of boarding houses is described, followed by issues associated with building conditions. This section also covers the perspective of boarding house landlords and managers, and some alternative forms of single person accommodation are described.

2.3.1 Defining Boarding Houses

Definitions of boarding houses and other forms of single room accommodation vary internationally (Amore, 2012). In literature from North America and Australia, there is frequent use of the terms ‘rooming house’ or ‘lodging house’, which in most instances have similar characteristics to ‘boarding houses’ in New Zealand. These definitions all refer to accommodation where tenants have occupancy of a bedroom and share other areas of the premises.

In Canada, the term ‘boarding house’ refers to premises that also provide meals and onsite support staff, often catering to people with addictions or mental illness (Freeman, 2013). Boarding houses can come under various forms of private, social service and non-profit organisation ownership. ‘Rooming houses’ are predominantly privately-owned and operate on short term leases. Both types of premises are regulated by the same bylaws, and usually provide accommodation for the working poor and welfare recipients (Freeman, 2013).

In Australia, there are minor variations in the way that premises are defined in different States. ‘Boarding house’, ‘rooming house’ and ‘lodging house’ having much the same meaning, although traditionally boarding houses were establishments that provided meals, while rooming houses did not (Chamberlain, 2012a). Distinctions are seldom made clear in Australian research, and the terms are largely interchangeable. In the context of Australia, there is a relatively clear distinction between ‘hostels’ which are purpose built or established to cater to the needs of those requiring care, and boarding houses, which have evolved and adapted as a result of deinstitutionalisation to sometimes cater for a similar tenant base (Horan et al., 2001).

In the New Zealand Context the Residential Tenancy Act (1986) definition is rather brief. Boarding houses are defined under Section 66B of the act as:

Containing 1 or more boarding rooms along with facilities for communal use by tenants of the boarding house and; occupied, or intended by the landlord to be occupied, by at least 6 tenants at any one time.

New Zealand has no statutory requirement for the registration of boarding houses, consequently there are challenges for planners and regulators in monitoring boarding houses and accurately counting premises.

2.3.2 The Geography of Boarding Houses

The geographical changes resulting from deinstitutionalisation have had profound effects on consumers of services, health service workers and neighbours (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). As a result of deinstitutionalisation, the locations where people with mental illness reside is of vital importance to their treatment (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998; Yanos, 2007). Clustering and concentrating housing and services within particular areas offers advantages for mental health service consumers over spreading facilities throughout suburban areas, an alternative referred to in American literature as 'scatter-site housing' (Yanos, 2007). When facilities are spread out, residents are forced to live in areas that they are unfamiliar with which may be further away from family, services and support networks. There is a reluctance of many high need and vulnerable people to move from the formal and informal social support structures of their communities into suburban locations (Kearns & Joseph, 2000).

From a treatment perspective, access to shops, recreational activities and places to interact are key components of community integration and imposing barriers to access is considered contrary to good practise (Yanos, 2007). There has been a tendency for the clustering of services and residences to be concentrated in areas that share common characteristics such as, a high level of transience, and low rental affordability as well as the presence of services (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). Cost aside, there are several advantages to boarding houses being located in these areas including, walkability, proximity to transportation, access to shops, access to services and recreational opportunities (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). Walking and public transport can be the only means of independent transport, as alternatives such as support agency vehicles limit the type of interactions and activities that they can partake in (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998).

A lack of opportunities for motorised transport could also be a factor influencing preferences for centrally located residences by boarding house residents. Personal vehicle ownership is not the norm for boarding house residents with cost, lack of parking, and difficulty in maintaining a licence preventing most from vehicle ownership.

Some Australian statistical data shows that the number of boarding houses in Australia is declining (Drake, 2013), however there are arguments to the contrary (Chamberlain, 2012a, b). Foley (2009) attributed this reported decline to the closure of large traditional boarding houses, tenant preferences for more privacy, gentrification of neighbourhoods, and reduced opportunities for profit by landlords. While large boarding houses in commercial centres have declined, there has been an increase in smaller premises located in suburban areas, many of which operate in breach of regulations (Chamberlain, 2012a; Foley, 2009). Similarly in Canada, there has been a trend towards smaller suburban ‘rooming houses’, a consequence of inner city gentrification and rising property prices (Freeman, 2013).

2.3.3 Conditions of Boarding House Premises

The standards of boarding house premises are variable, however they are often regarded as a low-standard accommodation type (Gallagher & Gove, 2007; Martin, 2015). The profit motive of some landlords can encourage them to provide more rooms, resulting in illegal modifications that compromise the safety and welfare of tenants (Foley, 2009). Under a free market model, if penalties for breaches of regulations are inadequate, they will do very little to deter illegal activities by landlords (Foley, 2009). Overcrowding and poor standards of construction, amenities, sanitation and safety, commonly feature in literature on boarding houses. Not all risks were associated with the buildings themselves, the mix of tenants and the conduct of some managers can also contribute negatively to living environment. Amore (2009, p.30) was critical of conditions in some premises in South Auckland, New Zealand, describing them as:

Crowded, vermin-infested, and expensive. Communal facilities were woefully inadequate. Communal areas were unsafe—due to the exposed wiring, overflowing toilets, and the violence, intimidation and drug deals that may be encountered.

Drake (2013) described New South Wales boarding houses as having a declining reputation, due to human rights violations, poor hygiene, and sexual and physical assaults

on residents. Gallagher & Gove (2007) characterised boarding houses in Melbourne as having communal areas where people didn't feel safe, insufficient hot water for the number of residents, a poor standard of cleanliness, and inadequate basic facilities such as cooking equipment.

Overcrowded premises feature prominently in literature on boarding houses. Overcrowding can lead to safety concerns as described by Foley (2009 p.17); "*overcrowding places pressure on essential services such as plumbing, electrics and waste disposal, creating public health and fire risks.*" Martin (2015, p.23) describes the crowded conditions of a lodging house in Sydney, Australia as:

58 beds, in 19 makeshift rooms, in a three-bedroom house. Ten people lodging in a single bedroom. Beds installed on apartment balconies, in bathrooms and laundries and, in one case, a pantry. A shower installed in a hall.

2.3.4 Management Implications of Boarding Houses

Boarding house owners and managers are exposed to the often complex needs of residents, many of whom have mental health and addiction problems (Deane *et al.*, 2012). Landlords and managers can have poor reputations in some communities. Gallagher & Gove (2007), suggests that the conduct of some landlords in Melbourne, Australia was so poor that it had some long-term homeless shunning offers of accommodation in private boarding houses, choosing instead to exist without shelter. A number of abuses by landlords were identified, including the holding of personal items such as identification and money cards as security, and unlawful threats of eviction (Gallagher & Gove, 2007).

Deane *et al.* (2012) explored issues of boarding houses from the perspective of managers and owners. Owners and managers seldom have any formal qualifications for dealing with the difficult needs of their clients, and results are variable (Deane *et al.*, 2012). According to Deane *et al.* (2012), in a survey of boarding house managers in Sydney, 40 percent would not permit known substance users to live in their premises while 86 percent stated that they would permit residency of people with mental illness. In circumstances where alternatives are not available, when people with mental health and substance issues are excluded from boarding houses they could be faced with complete homelessness (Deane *et al.*, 2012). Managers are often called upon to offer additional support to clients over and above what is usually required of accommodation providers. Such tasks involve

informal counselling and referrals to agencies, yet a lack of knowledge contributes to an uncertainty over how to act (Deane *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.5 Alternatives to Private Boarding Houses

While many boarding house tenants lack housing choices, there are various other accommodation forms that can provide for the needs of low income or vulnerable tenants. The options described below, when available, can offer alternatives to private boarding house tenancies and can be considered as options for social service workers with a responsibility for assisting people into accommodation.

Not-for-Profit Boarding Houses

The State Government of Victoria, Australia has responded to a decline in the number of registered private boarding house options for marginalised and low-income people by facilitating the establishment of not-for-profit boarding houses (Foley, 2009; Grace, Malone & Murphy, 2015). By changing the model under which boarding houses operate from privately operated hands to not-for-profit community sector entities, the economic motivation that can lead to the exploitation of tenants is removed (Foley, 2009). Not-for-profit boarding houses can be trusted recipients of public funding, and can be subject to additional levels of regulation and accountability. They are also better placed to address the complex needs of transient tenants by providing a safe, stable temporary environment, and working towards breaking the cycle of transience (Foley, 2009). A limited number of boarding houses in New Zealand are owned by not-for-profit housing trusts, however uncertainty over funding can impose difficulties in the operation of these premises (Badcock, 2014).

Social Housing

Social housing in New Zealand is becoming less accessible for those in need, particularly for single person households (Badcock, 2014). Economic and welfare reform in the 1980s and 1990s have had significant implications on low-income housing in New Zealand (Austin, Gurran & Whitehead, 2014). The introduction of market-based social housing rents and the accommodation supplement removed much of the direct control of the State in the provision of social and low-income housing (Badcock, 2014). New Zealand and Australia have both experienced declines in social housing numbers since the 1990s, a trend attributed to a neo-liberal approach to the provision of housing (Austin, Gurran & Whitehead, 2014). Social housing policy at central government level in New Zealand has

been dominated by the provision of dwellings that cater to nuclear families at the exclusion of single person households (Baxter, 1996). State housing operated by Housing New Zealand is dominated by two to four bedroom dwellings in suburban areas, and seldom caters to the accommodation needs of singles. Community housing is provided by councils and some not-for-profit organisations offer one bedroom units, however it is more common for the needs of single person household in New Zealand to be catered for by the private sector, commonly in boarding houses (Badcock, 2014).

Camping Grounds

Camping grounds offer an alternative form of temporary accommodation to boarding houses. Unlike boarding houses, camping grounds tend to be located in suburban areas of cities, or in smaller regional communities (Chamberlain, 2005). Both accommodation types have private sleeping spaces with communal facilities, have insecure tenancies, and are at the affordable end of the housing market (Chamberlain, 2005). Like boarding houses, camping grounds can create opportunities for community networking through the use of shared spaces and shared activities (Severinsen, 2010). A buoyant property market in Auckland has seen an increase in the uptake of camping grounds as a form of long stay accommodation for marginalised groups (Severinsen, 2010). Clients of the mental health system, former prisoners and placements from government and non-government service providers feature among long-term camping ground residents (Severinsen, 2010). Similarly to boarding houses, camping ground residents lack the formal protection of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*, with no provision of secure tenure or protection from eviction. Aside from the lack of eviction protection, it is also illegal for tenants to reside in New Zealand camping grounds for periods greater than 50 days (Amore, 2009; Severinsen, 2010). However, unlike boarding houses, camping grounds in New Zealand are subject to licencing requirements under Section 120B of the *Health Act 1956*, imposing a level of accountability on landlords for standards of accommodation, cleanliness and sanitation.

Studio Rooms

Studio rooms are a form of accommodation that has become common in Dunedin. They cater mainly to students, offering leases on individual rooms with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities. Technically there are few differences between studio room complexes and boarding houses, however for the most part studio rooms are of higher quality which is reflected in higher rental rates (University of Otago, 2015). Case law has

established that studio room complexes that are consistent with the Section 66B of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* definition of boarding house, should have the same legal standing as a boarding house (*Portfolio Property Management Ltd V Clutterbuck [2013] NZHC 3165*, , 2013). Therefore, fixed term tenancies are not permitted and tenants are not required to give notice to terminate the tenancy.

2.3.6 Summary

Single room occupancy accommodation with shared facilities is common in many parts of the world. These premises types come under a variety of different names, for example, ‘rooming house’, ‘lodging house’ and ‘house of multiple occupation’. They all fulfil a housing need and tend to operate at the affordable end of housing markets. They share many characteristics globally, including their spatial distribution and the manner in which their role has changed in response to economic and social policy transformations. The living conditions of boarding houses can be poor, and many researchers question the suitability of the environment for vulnerable tenants.

2.4 PLANNING AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

This section outlines the planning and regulatory framework under which boarding houses operate internationally. Some significant planning issues and challenges are identified, and comparisons are made with Australia where arguably some state governments have more progressive and proactive stances. The planning framework specific to boarding houses in New Zealand is discussed separately in the Chapter Four of this thesis.

2.4.1 Key Planning Issues

Regulation at both central and local government level impacts significantly on housing outcomes for vulnerable people. Poor regulation of boarding houses can lead to safety risks, sub-standard conditions and exploitation of tenants over price and lease conditions (Moore & Farrell, 2011). Much of the impetus for regulation of boarding houses arises from government responses to safety concerns. Boarding house bylaws in Canada were implemented at least in part, because of some significant mass casualty fire events (Freeman, 2013). In Victoria, Australia rooming house fires and concerns over building standards prompted the formation of a state government task force and a substantial review of regulations (Foley, 2009).

The pace of deinstitutionalisation and the changes it brought to the spatial distribution of accommodation and mental health services has not always been responded to appropriately by planners and other stakeholders. Community-care facilities and accommodation represented a whole new land use type that hadn't previously needed to be planned for (Day, 2004). Large residential buildings in New Zealand, including private boarding houses and supported accommodation facilities can be subject to the notification provisions of the *Resource Management Act 1991*, which provides opportunities for neighbours and communities to participate in the consultation process (Kearns and Joseph, 2000). The right of people in communities to object can make it difficult to establish housing in some neighbourhoods for people on low incomes or with a high level of need (Kearns & Joseph, 2000). Neighbourhood characteristics such as transience and the pre-existence of establishments of a similar type are less likely to lead to neighbours objecting, resulting in a concentration of these housing types in particular neighbourhoods (Day, 2004; Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998).

'Not-in-my-backyard' (NIMBY) syndrome is prevalent in much of the literature on boarding houses, and is frequently identified as being one of the major planning issues. NIMBY refers to individuals or groups that object to the presence of a particular activity in their neighbourhood (Dear, 1992). Freeman (2013) argues that the reasoning behind many objections to the presence of boarding houses are based on false perceptions and exaggerated concerns. The motivation to object to the presence of boarding houses can include, perceived safety risks, perceived crime risk, perceived threats to neighbourhood character and perceived threats to property values (Freeman, 2013; Ruming, 2014). NIMBY is a common environmental planning issue arising from the decentralisation of psychiatric services (Day, 2004), and is recognised as a contributor to the clustering of boarding houses in particular neighbourhoods (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998).

2.4.2 Compliance and Inspections of Premises

Proposals for tighter standards and more rigorous compliance are seldom seen by boarding house operators in a positive light (Foley, 2009). Tightening of regulation can increase compliance costs, which are in turn passed onto consumers, a situation that further exacerbates the financial difficulties of some tenants (Foley, 2009). Regulatory authorities can be reluctant to carry out enforcement on illegally operated boarding house establishments, as enforcement can compound problems for vulnerable tenants with few

other accommodation choices (Chamberlain, 2012b; Lockyer, 2012). The forced closure of boarding houses for regulatory breaches leads to displacement and possibly homelessness for existing tenants (Freeman, 2013). A status of illegality for boarding house premises serves to further diminish the reputation of a housing form that is already poorly regarded (Freeman, 2013). The vulnerability of tenants is another factor that adds to the complexity of enforcement and compliance. Enforcement processes that rely on complaints are less effective than proactive measures such as mandated inspections (Chamberlain, 2012b). Fear of eviction and repercussions can make tenants reluctant to pursue complaints (Foley, 2009).

Processes of compliance and inspections can become complex and cumbersome when there are multiple agencies involved, for example health, building standards and residential tenancy services (Westmore, 2013). Different agencies and regulatory organisations have different statutory powers and obligations, such as the powers of entry that are essential to enable inspections (Foley, 2009; Freeman, 2013). Better coordination between local authorities, social services and other stakeholders can improve the effectiveness of inspections (Westmore, 2013). Freeman (2013) alludes to confusion within the newly amalgamated areas of Toronto, Canada where there are differing zone rules on matters such as licensing and registration, and in some areas boarding houses are prohibited altogether. Without adequate models of registration and licensing of premises, any regulations around standards, compliance and enforcement will be of little consequence (Foley, 2009). Smaller premises such as those that characterise suburban ‘rooming houses’ in Melbourne and ‘lodging houses’ in Sydney, Australia are harder to monitor, less likely to be registered, and therefore less likely to be subject to enforcement action for rule breaches (Chamberlain, 2012b; Foley, 2009). Processes of compliance and enforcement can also be hampered by, insufficient resources, inconsistency of approach between authorities and inadequate powers of enforcement (Freeman, 2013).

In the United Kingdom a dwelling is required to be registered as a ‘House in Multiple Occupation’ if it has three or more renters that are not of the same family (Government of United Kingdom, 2015). Licences are required for all premises that are; “*rented to 5 or more people who form more than one household, at least 3 storeys high, and tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities*” (Government of United Kingdom, 2015). Additional licencing requirements can be imposed by local councils. All licence holders have to be ‘fit and proper’ for the role, smoke alarms are required, and there are annual

certification requirements for gas and electrical appliances (Government of United Kingdom, 2015).

2.4.3 Australian Planning and Regulatory Framework

The boarding house sector in Australia is controlled by stringent legislative and policy oversight at State Government level (Chamberlain, 2012a; Foley, 2009). This is a tier of government that does not exist in New Zealand, hence added responsibility falls on both central and local government organisations. State governments in Australia have been proactive in regulating the private boarding house or ‘rooming house’ sector.

In Victoria safety concerns including fatal fires, tenant exploitation and an increase in the number of premises being operating illegally prompted the Rooming House Standards Taskforce in 2009 (Foley, 2009; Lockyer, 2012). As a result of a change in government few of the recommendations were implemented, however eleven minimum standards were established. These include standards for, security, fire safety and overcrowding, as well as requirements for the registration of premises (Lockyer, 2012; Westmore, 2013). Rooming Houses in Victoria are explicitly recognised in a number of statutes including, *The Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, the *Health Act, 1958* the *Building Act, 1993*, *Building Regulations* and the *Building Code of Australia* (Foley, 2009). Most small premises in Victoria are exempted from the requirement for planning permission. Permission is only required for the establishment of single room occupancy accommodation if the number of rooms exceeds 10 (Foley, 2009). In Victoria, the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* imposes requirements on ‘rooming houses’ in relation to fire safety, including hard wired smoke detection systems in all rooming houses, and for rooming houses with more than 12 residents there are additional requirements for evacuation plans, fire-fighting equipment and sprinkler systems (Chamberlain, 2012a).

Official numbers of boarding houses in New South Wales have declined, but many premises operate outside of the licenced the sector, often in breach of legislation (Drake, 2013). In New South Wales, the *Boarding Houses Act 2012* sets a threshold of five or more people, and requires boarding house premises to be registered, and inspected for building compliance and fire safety standards (Martin, 2015). Additionally, there are local government provisions that require boarding house premises to obtain a development consent (Martin, 2015). Pursuant to the *Youth and Community Services Act 1973*, there is a requirement for proprietors of boarding houses to have a licence if there

are two or more people in the establishment with a disability (Drake, 2014). Licencing of boarding houses was imposed as a means to address the growing number of recently deinstitutionalised patients among the tenant base (Drake, 2014). The Department of Family and Community Services has a responsibility for administering the licences (Drake, 2013).

2.4.4 Summary

This section describes the legislative and planning frameworks under which boarding house premises are regulated and operated. Planning and legislative provisions in different countries vary significantly, but address issues that are very similar. Public opposition to single room occupancy and low-income housing is a common planning constraint. Safety concerns and adverse conditions are key drivers of boarding house regulation, but authorities have to balance tenant needs for reasonable living conditions with their needs for affordable accommodation.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The literature review provides an overview of the attributes of boarding house tenants, premises and the environments and the regulatory frameworks that they exist in different parts of the world. The issues that characterise many boarding house tenants and boarding house premises have clear parallels. Mental illness, homelessness, physical health concerns, criminal justice system involvement, and gender issues are the dominant recurring themes relating to boarding house tenants. There are international parallels in the type and distribution of boarding house premises. There are differences in the ways that they are defined, although single room tenancies with shared facilities are a common form of affordable accommodation form in most cities. Similarities exist in the ways that boarding houses are spatially distributed within urban areas, and in the way that trends such as deinstitutionalisation and gentrification have affected their distribution. There is a tendency for boarding houses to be concentrated and clustered near urban centres. The low reputation of boarding houses lends itself to the concept of ‘NIMBY’, which presents a significant planning challenge. Some boarding house premises themselves can be characterised by low standards of maintenance and construction, poor sanitation, overcrowding, and safety concerns. These concerns have been dealt with inconsistently, and generally in an ad-hoc fashion by regulators. Some authorities recognise boarding houses in policies and plans and implement licensing, registration and inspection

processes. New Zealand legislation does not impose registration or licencing, but provides for limited inspections to be carried out by regulatory authorities although, Inspections are seldom carried out. Regulations do not occur in a vacuum, as factors such as policies on health and welfare and market forces interact to further compound the issues that regulations try to prevent. Some boarding house operators will respond to well-intentioned regulations by boarding house operators by taking steps to conceal their activities. The key themes that have been sourced from literature on boarding houses inform the research design of this study.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology of the current study and provides justification for the chosen research design. The methods employed in this study have been informed by the key themes that emerged in the literature review in Chapter Two. The objectives of this research are focused on identifying the issues and problems associated with private boarding houses, and informing solutions. Private boarding houses are an accommodation form often accessed by vulnerable and marginalised tenants. Therefore, the research design chosen needs to be ethically sound and needs to take account of the sensitivities of carrying out research on potentially vulnerable individuals. To achieve the objectives of the research, a qualitative case study methodology based on grounded theory has been chosen. Primary information was collected through a series of interviews conducted with key informants and a survey of boarding house tenants. The purpose of the interviews was to discover the views, values and opinions of the participants in relation to boarding houses. Secondary research was completed in the form of a literature review, and an analysis of the legislative and planning frameworks under which boarding houses in the study areas exist.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design outlines the manner in which the research is carried out in order to achieve the research objectives of the study. A literature review was completed to place the research in an international and national context, and to identify key themes, issues and problems that characterise boarding houses. This thematic framework helped to shape the research approach and the analysis of the results. The body of literature on boarding houses in New Zealand is limited. It was therefore necessary to take an expansive approach, incorporating international literature, the New Zealand context, and the experiential knowledge of people. The primary research for this study comprised interviews with key informants, and a survey of boarding house tenants.

3.2.1 A Qualitative Case Study Approach using Grounded Theory

This research utilises a qualitative methodological approach based on ‘grounded theory’. This approach uses a variety of methods to collect non-quantitative data based on the experiences of people (Sarantakos, 1998). The research for this study was completed in two separate case study areas, Auckland and Dunedin allowing for comparisons to be made between the two locations. This research uses a descriptive case study approach, whereby contemporary issues are to be dealt with in depth (Biggam, 2015).

Qualitative research itself is not easily defined (Mason, 2002). The qualitative approach seeks a holistic approach to the data. It is not guided or constrained by prescriptive methods or formal knowledge in the way that quantitative analysis is (Sarantakos, 1998). Grounded theory is a systematic methodology designed to interpret qualitative data (Glaser, Strauss & Strutzel, 1968). It was originally devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Sarantakos (1998, p.200) wrote in reference to grounded theory; “*The centre of its interest is not on collecting volumes of data, but organising the variety of thoughts and experiences the researcher gathers during the analysis of the data.*” Mason (2002, p.180) considered grounded theory to be a:

Theory comes last view [...] where the researcher will develop theoretical propositions or explanations out of the data in a process which is commonly seen as moving from the particular to the general.

Grounded theory was employed for this study because the issues associated with boarding houses and boarding house tenants are of a complexity that requires an in-depth analysis of the research subjects’ experiences. The data collection and analysis in this study requires a process that acknowledges the individual differences of the participants, but seeks to find common characteristics along which the data can be grouped.

The main source of data for this research is obtained through interviews with key informants. In keeping with qualitative methodology, the questions are generally broad and open-ended. Research subjects are encouraged to impart their knowledge, opinions and perspectives in an unconstrained manner that helps to capture an expansive body of information. From reviewing the data, it can then be coded and grouped into a series of key concepts. The concepts are then placed into broad categories that can then be used to generate theory.

3.2.2 Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework for this research was established through a review of relevant literature. The literature review in Chapter Two shapes the methodology of the research through the discovery of key themes. It was completed through reading and reviewing various articles, theses, books and websites relating to boarding houses and the predominant themes associated with them. Articles were sourced through searches of article data bases including Google Scholar, Scopus and Pro Quest. Initial searches using key words such as ‘boarding houses’ and ‘New Zealand’ had limited results. It soon became apparent that specific research on boarding houses in New Zealand was limited to only a handful of studies, and that the majority of the literature used for this study would need to be sourced from overseas articles. There is a wide body of useful literature originating from Australia and Canada. These countries provide some contextual similarities to New Zealand, with many cultural, political and legal similarities.

Boarding houses are by no means a universally defined or homogeneous accommodation type. It was necessary to carry out searches under ‘boarding house’, but also ‘lodging house’ and ‘rooming house’, terms commonly used in Australia and Canada. There are many variations in the size, form, location, planning provisions and definitions of boarding houses, however for the scope of the literature review, they comprise rooms that can be individually rented along with access to communal facilities. These forms of housing exist in most developed countries to satisfy a need for affordable single person accommodation. Similarities in the characteristics of these premises and their tenants are evident across a wide body of international literature. Through reading literature on boarding houses, a number of predominant themes emerged on the characteristics of tenants including, deinstitutionalisation and tenants with mental illness, physical health implications, homelessness and transience, women in boarding houses, and ex-prisoners in boarding houses. Themes relating to environmental factors included, types of premises, geography and spatial distribution, building standards, and safety. Other studies focus on the planning and regulatory environments, and the literature review addresses this by comparing the New Zealand planning and regulatory framework with international examples. Comparisons were made with the Australian context, which has a far greater body of literature on boarding houses than New Zealand.

Within the broad categories of themes there is an interrelatedness. The tenants of boarding houses influence and are influenced by their living environment. The living environment is influenced by the planning and regulatory framework, however there is less certainty over the ability of the planning and regulatory framework to respond to changes and concerns with the living environment. Figure 3, below denotes the three broad categories of themes that were identified in the literature review.

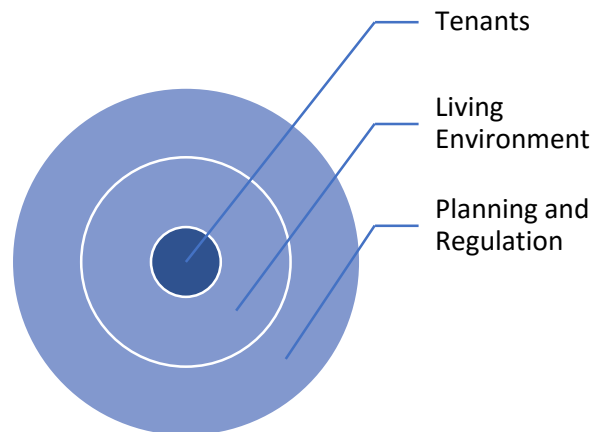


Figure 3: Main categories of themes in boarding house literature

3.2.3 Key Informant Interviews

The key informants participating in this research included tenants, landlords, government social service agents, social service workers from non-governmental organisations, regulatory authority staff, and planners. They were selected for the research due to their experiences and professional involvement with boarding houses and boarding house tenants. Key informants were recruited by various means including ‘purposive sampling’ through phone calls and emails to selected individuals, and ‘snowball sampling,’ where available respondents would identify further suitable key informants (Sarantakos, 1998). Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions aligned with the research objectives [see Appendix A]. These questions were intended to elicit the key informants knowledge, experiences, and values. The key informants’ first-hand experiences and expert opinions were sought to identify the major issues associated with boarding houses. Opinions were also sought on planning considerations, whether they believe the current planning framework for boarding houses is adequate, and suggestions on ways in which regulatory and non-regulatory planning mechanisms could be improved.

There is considerable value in seeking the views of boarding house tenants, as it acknowledges their rights, can lead to service improvements, and provides perspectives that can be at odds with commonly held perceptions (Drake, 2013; Horan *et al.*, 2001). While boarding house tenants were interviewed in the same manner as other key informants, there were particular sensitivities and ethical considerations that had to be taken into account. In adhering to the ethical requirements of the research, tenants had to be recruited in particular ways and criteria had to be put in place to avoid any perceptions of compulsion. It was decided that two separate processes would be employed. One method involved seeking permission of landlords and then leaving a notice for tenants to contact the researcher if they were interested in partaking in an interview. The second method involved asking staff from social service agencies to help find willing interview participants.

A total of 24 key informants were interviewed for this research, 12 each in Auckland and Dunedin. Table 1 below lists the key informants interviewed for the research.

Table 1: Key Informants

KI Number	Role	Location
1	Tenancy Services	Dunedin
2	Pars Dunedin 1	Dunedin
3	Pars Dunedin 2	Dunedin
4	Min Social Development	Dunedin
5	Landlord 1	Dunedin
6	Pars Auckland 1	Auckland
7	Pars Auckland 2	Auckland
8	Monte Cecilia Trust 1	Auckland
9	Monte Cecilia Trust 2	Auckland
10	City Mission 1	Auckland
11	City Mission 2	Auckland
12	Auckland Council 1	Auckland
13	Auckland Council 2	Auckland
14	Auckland Council 3	Auckland
15	Salvation Army 1	Auckland
16	Salvation Army 2	Auckland
17	Salvation Army 3	Auckland
18	Salvation Army 4	Auckland
19	Boarding house tenant 1	Dunedin
20	Boarding house tenant 2	Dunedin
21	Dunedin City Council	Dunedin
22	Landlord 2	Dunedin
23	Boarding house tenant 3	Dunedin
24	Boarding house tenant 4	Dunedin

3.2.4 Boarding House Tenant Survey

Due to the difficulties of recruiting boarding house tenants, it was decided that a survey would be used as a method of obtaining additional data from tenants. A total of ten boarding house tenants completed an eight question survey based on the nature of their tenancy and perceptions of their living environment [see Appendix B]. The survey allowed for data to be collected in a more anonymous and sensitive way, more in keeping with the stringent ethical requirements of the research.

3.2.5 Primary Data Collection

All participants were asked to partake in one-on-one interviews which were recorded by a Dictaphone. Questions were matter of fact and not intended to elicit any personal information. Before the commencement of the interviews, the participants were asked to read an information sheet and sign a consent form [see Appendix C]. The recorded interview data was transcribed as required at a later stage. During the research phase, all audiotaped data and transcriptions were stored on the researchers password protected personal computer in accordance with the ethical requirements of the University of Otago.

3.2.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The key informant and tenant interview transcripts were reviewed to identify key themes, and to compare findings to the literature review. The data was then coded along the lines of these key themes in a manner that reflected the objectives of the research. The coded data was then grouped into broad categories. An analysis was then made of the coded data with a view to informing recommendations.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a requirement of this research, it was necessary for the researcher to complete and submit an application to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. Due to the potential vulnerability of boarding house tenants, it was necessary to complete a 'Category A' application, which imposed stringent ethical standards on the research. At the time that the research was carried out, the researcher was a sworn police officer, and this raised additional ethical considerations. As a police officer the researcher was ethically bound to intervene in or report matters they witnessed if they were serious, and it is in the public interest to do so. However, this needed to be balanced with the ethics

of the research which imposes an obligation of confidentiality. To avoid any potential conflict of interest, the researcher avoided using participants that they had previously dealt with through the course of their professional duties. There was also an undertaking by the researcher to immediately terminate interviews and dispose of data if a conflict of interest was disclosed during an interview.

The research involved talking to boarding house tenants who due to their personal circumstances can be vulnerable. Therefore the researcher made an undertaking that if the process of the interviews was seen to be in any way distressing to the tenants, the interview would be terminated immediately. To counter any such risks the researcher did not enter onto the grounds of any boarding houses without the permission of a landlord or manager.

3.4 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF BOARDING HOUSE RESEARCH

Previous studies have recognised some inherent difficulties in carrying out research on boarding houses and boarding house tenants. According to Drake (2013), there are challenges in recruiting boarding house tenants for interviews, and this can lead to them being under-represented in research. Other participants such as government agency workers tend to be more willing, or have a sense of obligation to be involved in research, and are therefore generally better represented. Tenants can be reluctant to partake in research for various reasons, but common reasons for their non-participation are, fear of eviction or retribution by landlords and a lack of privacy and confidentiality (Drake, 2013). Locating representative cross-sections of tenants and premises is difficult, and often those that can be researched are not truly representative (Hwang *et al.*, 2003).

The strict ethical requirements of this research imposed difficulties in the recruitment of boarding house tenants. The recommended approach of leaving a notice at boarding houses for tenants to contact the researcher was ineffective, however the secondary method of recruiting with the assistance of social service agents proved to be more successful. A total of four boarding house tenants agreed to partake in key informant interviews and a total of ten respondents completed the boarding house survey. Time constraints on research in the Auckland case study area meant that research was limited to a period of two and half days. Within that time frame it was not possible to complete interviews of boarding house tenants or landlords, therefore the only tenant and landlord participants in the research were in the Dunedin case study area. It was fortunate

however, that two of the key informants interviewed had been tenants in boarding houses in both case study areas and were able to offer some comparisons between their experiences in Auckland and Dunedin.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework and research design, and provides justification for the methods used for this research. The theoretical underpinnings of the research approach taken have been outlined. A qualitative methodology has been utilised for this research in two case study areas. The primary data collection and methods of data analysis have been explained. The findings from the primary data were compared with the secondary data to confirm similarities with the theoretical framework. The findings from the research are presented and discussed in Chapters Five and Six. The final part of this chapter describes some ethical considerations, sensitive issues specific to research on boarding houses and the limitations of the current study.

4 CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview for the current research by focusing on aspects of boarding houses in New Zealand generally, and in the case study areas of Auckland and Dunedin. The first section concerns statistical information on New Zealand boarding houses and the people living in them. The regulatory and policy frameworks of boarding houses at central government level are detailed with an overview of the legislative and policy context. The case study areas are described, along with the historical context of these areas, and pertinent issues that impact on boarding house accommodation in those areas. Particular attention is given to rising house prices in Auckland and associated impacts on renters at the lower end of the market. The planning framework at local government level in the case study areas is described, including the implications of Auckland's transformation into a unitary authority.

4.2 BOARDING HOUSES AND BOARDING HOUSE TENANTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Historically, boarding houses were a reputable form of accommodation in New Zealand. From the Victorian period they occupied prime sites in urban centres and catered predominantly to wealthy and middle income males (Te Ara, 2015). From the 1920s boarding houses faced a declining reputation, as other housing options became available and many people migrated from inner cities to suburban areas (Te Ara, 2015). The role of boarding houses has changed in the ensuing years, yet they continue to play a role in providing affordable single room occupancy accommodation.

Obtaining an accurate count of boarding house numbers in any country or large city is challenging (Chamberlain, 2012b). The 2013 New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings recorded a figure of 174 boarding houses across New Zealand, however records from the department of Building and Housing estimated the number to be approximately 500 (New Zealand Government, 2015b; Statistics New Zealand, 2015a). Monitoring of boarding houses is challenging in the New Zealand context, because there is no statutory requirement for the registration of premises. Notably, the actual number of boarding houses captured by the New Zealand census are likely to be under-represented due to a lack of clarity definitions, and the likelihood that many boarding

houses would have been captured in the data as another form of accommodation. According to New Zealand census data, in 2013 there were 2718 people living in boarding houses in New Zealand, including 1362 in Auckland and 237 in Dunedin (Statistics New Zealand, 2015a).

Boarding houses in New Zealand cater for a broad range of people, and although many tenants come from lower income or marginalised groups, there are also many single working people living in boarding house accommodation. Table 2 below presents some statistical data on New Zealand boarding house tenants sourced from the 2013 Census.

Table 2: 2013 statistics of New Zealand boarding house residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% of tenants identify as being single compared to 39% of the general population • 52.4% of residents had lived in their boarding house for more than one year • 57.6% of residents are in the 30-64 age group compared to 45.4% in the general New Zealand population, while 30.7% were 15-29 compared to 19.9% • 54% of residents claim some income form working, up from 43% in 2006, although over half claim some form of government assistance • 14.4% of residents claimed an unemployment benefit compared to 4.8% of the general population, while 13.2% of residents were on a sickness benefit <p>(Statistics New Zealand, 2015a)</p>

Additionally, statistical data portrays a boarding house population that exists on lower incomes than the general population (Statistics New Zealand, 2015a). A higher proportion of boarding house tenants are Māori, Pacific Peoples or Asian than the general New Zealand population, while less than half of the boarding house population identify as European (Statistics New Zealand, 2015a). Statistics on boarding house tenants present an overall population that is poorer, more transient and more dependent on government financial assistance than the general New Zealand population.

4.3 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The New Zealand regulatory framework for boarding houses is complicated by a fragmented array of statutes (New Zealand Government, 2012). Key statutes include the

Residential Tenancies Act 1986, Housing Improvement Regulations 1947, Resource Management Act 1991, Local Government Act 2002, Building Act 2004, Building Regulations 2004 and Health Act 1956. Each statute has differing terminology, varying definitions and empowers different agencies with administrative, compliance and enforcement responsibilities.

Rental housing and the relationship between tenants and landlords in New Zealand is governed by the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*, although it is only recently that boarding houses have been included in the Act. The *Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2010* inserted provisions that gave recognition to boarding houses, boarding house tenancies and the contents of tenancy agreements. Under Section 66B of this Act boarding houses are defined as:

Containing 1 or more boarding rooms along with facilities for communal use by tenants of the boarding house and; occupied, or intended by the landlord to be occupied, by at least 6 tenants at any one time

This meaning differs from the definition included in Section 2 of the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947* within which a boarding house is defined as:

A house or part of a house, other than licensed premises, in which 5 or more persons other than the occupier and the members of his family are lodged, but with the right of entry by the occupier to any room in which such persons are lodged, and in which the occupier supplies any food to such persons

The two statutes differ in terms of minimum tenant numbers and the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947* contains dated language from a time when providing food was an obligation of the landlord. Boarding houses and boarding house tenancies are further defined in New Zealand Case Law. In the High Court Judgement of *Portfolio Property Management Ltd V Clutterbuck [2013] NZHC 3165* Goddard J ruled:

The Act does not allow for a tenant and landlord to enter into a boarding house tenancy for a fixed term. Instead, the tenant and landlord can terminate at any time in accordance with ss66U and 66V of the Act.

This judgement has had unintended implications for certain premises such as, studio room complexes intended for 6 or more residents, as these are deemed to be subject to

the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* Section 66B definition of a boarding house, yet it is typical for a landlord to offer fixed term leases.

The *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947* determines matters such as minimum standards of fitness for residential buildings, measures of overcrowding and can enable local authorities to produce registers of boarding houses. The *Health Act 1956* empowers council environmental health officers to inspect boarding house premises, generally for the purpose of maintaining proper standards of sanitation and reducing risks to health. Powers extend to the issuing of penalties, requiring repairs, issuing orders to close a premises, or prosecution. Proactive inspections are authorised, however in practise there has been a tendency for inspections or enforcement action to only be completed if there is response to a complaint (Aspinall, 2013).

The *Resource Management Act 1991*, (RMA), provides an overarching legislative framework for environmental planning in New Zealand. The RMA is effects-based legislation, and it imposes statutory obligations on local authorities to create rules, objectives, policies, and methods to manage the effects of activities. (Day, 2004). Local authorities are required under Sections 72-77 of the RMA to prepare a District Plan which can contain provisions that affect boarding houses. The *Local Government Act 2002* empowers local authorities to create bylaws, which can include provisions to determine the regulation of boarding houses.

Local authorities also have a responsibility for administering the *Building Act 2004*. It does not refer to or recognise boarding houses specifically, but deals with building types in a more generic sense. Boarding houses are excluded from the Building Act definition of 'household unit.' Within the ambit of the *Building Act 2004*, councils or contractors acting on behalf of councils, can inspect premises for compliance purposes. Buildings with 'specified systems', which can include sprinkler systems, are required to have a compliance schedule. The *Building Regulations 2004* require a building owner, subject to a compliance schedule, to supply an annual Warrant of Fitness certificate to a territorial authority. The added regulatory cost of providing essential safety features such as sprinklers, acts as a potential disincentive to the installation of features that improve safety. The *Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006* places fire safety obligations on building owners, including maintaining safe means of escape, adhering to evacuation procedures and preventing unsafe activities. Owners and tenants are also

required to take precautions in the use of electrical appliances, the use of naked flames are prohibited and there are restrictions on cooking using portable stoves.

4.3.1 2011 Parliamentary Inquiry into Boarding Houses.

A Parliamentary Inquiry into boarding houses took place in 2011. The Inquiry sought to consider the legislative frameworks that applied to boarding houses, and to determine whether the current regulations provided adequate protections to vulnerable tenants. The Social Service Committee made recommendations to the New Zealand Government, as displayed in Table 3 below. To date, none of the recommendations have been enacted into legislation, although in a broader sense they are determining policy actions by some local authorities. For example, Auckland Council are now completing proactive inspections of boarding houses and collaborating with government departments and social agencies to achieve a better outcome for boarding house tenants and the living environment.

Table 3: Recommendations from the 2011 parliamentary inquiry into boarding houses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Align terminology in the Health Act 1956 so that the definition of the term “dwelling house” specifically mentions boarding houses, and align the definition of “boarding house” in the Housing Improvement Regulations 1947 with the definition used in the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.</i> • <i>Require Statistics New Zealand to amend its Census Dwelling Form to enable boarding house residents and/or owners to self-identify as owning or residing in a boarding house.</i> • <i>Amend the “Application for approval of an evacuation scheme” form in the Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006 to require a building owner to specify a building’s current or intended use.</i> • <i>Ensure that information on boarding houses collected by territorial authorities and government agencies is shared in order to promote collaboration.</i> • <i>That where necessary it update the regulations under the Health Act 1956, the Building Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, and the Local Government Act 2002</i> • <i>Make the minimum standards more reflective of modern standards</i> • <i>Align penalties to reflect the costs of inspection and enforcement</i> • <i>Allow infringement notices to include the recovery of council enforcement costs</i>

- *Ensure that local territorial authorities are more proactive in enforcing the current legislative requirements of the Health Act 1956, the Building Act 2004, and the Residential Tenancies Act 1986*
(New Zealand Government, 2015).

4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF CASE STUDY AREAS

This research focuses on boarding houses, boarding house tenants, and regulatory frameworks in two New Zealand cities, Dunedin and Auckland. The two cities have contrasting patterns of population and housing market growth, and in particular there is a significant difference in housing affordability and choice.

4.4.1 Auckland General Context

Auckland is New Zealand's largest city and it has continued to grow significantly over the last 100 years. In the 2013 Census, Auckland was estimated to have a population of 1.42 million, representing an 8 percent increase since the previous Census in 2006. Since the previous Census in 2006, Auckland's population increased by 110,000 or 8 percent (Statistics New Zealand, 2015c). During that time the number of people living in rental accommodation increased by 18.5 percent (Goodyear & Fabian, 2014). In Auckland the median rental price in 2013 was estimated at \$400 NZD per week (Statistics New Zealand, 2015b). In 2013, 19 percent of Auckland households were single person households (Goodyear & Fabian, 2014). Auckland's population growth, property market growth, and gentrification has placed significant demands on forms of short-stay accommodation, including boarding houses.

Previously, boarding houses were concentrated in parts of Auckland close to the city centre, occupying large Edwardian mansions originally constructed as homes for the wealthy, while others were purpose-built (Baxter, 1996). Demand decreased in the post-World War Two period as a result of zoning changes that led to suburban development and a government push for home ownership. This led to a deterioration in the standard of buildings and a lowering of the reputation of boarding houses (Baxter, 1996; Te Ara, 2015). Boarding houses in suburbs such as, Ponsonby, Freemans Bay and Herne Bay developed a reputation for poverty, crime and drunkenness in the 1960s. The 1980s was a period of gentrification and regeneration, with boarding houses demolished or restored as private homes with the tenants displaced (Baxter, 1996). Deinstitutionalisation of

mental health services through the 1980s and early 1990s placed further demands on Auckland's remaining boarding houses.

The closure of boarding houses and a lack of development opportunities for community or supported accommodation has contributed in part to a high number of homeless and itinerant people living in central Auckland (Jansen, 2015; Kearns & Joseph, 2000). Auckland has by far the highest number of homeless and transient renters in the country, and the greatest demand for emergency housing. Boarding houses in Auckland are commonly accessed by transient tenants and are seen as one of the few alternatives for social service workers to house the homeless (Jansen, 2015). The Auckland Council Homelessness Action Plan 2012-2015 is a regional initiative that aligns responses to homelessness across the newly merged 'Auckland Super City' (Auckland Council, 2015c). It includes initiatives to work with marginalised boarding house tenants. There is also a Memorandum of understanding on homelessness in existence between the Auckland Council, government service providers and non-governmental organisations such as the Salvation Army, the Auckland City Mission and Lifewise. Although Auckland homeless policy strives for a preventative approach, according to Jansen (2015) in practise the focus of intervention tends to be on those living without shelter rather than the marginally housed, such as boarding house tenants.

Following the closure of many boarding house premises in central Auckland, a significant cluster of boarding houses emerged in South Auckland on the site of a former hospital in Mangere (Amore, 2009). These facilities quickly developed a reputation for overcrowding, poor maintenance, poor sanitation and safety concerns (Amore, 2009). While Amore (2009) attributed many of these problems to exploitative practises by unscrupulous landlords, they are also symptomatic of the prevailing buoyant conditions of the Auckland property market. Under these circumstances low-income and marginalised tenants can have few housing alternatives. In 2008 an action plan was adopted to carry out widespread inspections of boarding houses in South Auckland following some negative media attention highlighting concerns about building standards. (Amore, 2009; New Zealand Government, 2015a). The plan was a joint initiative between central government agencies and the former Manakau City Council. Much of the concern focused on the plight of families living in boarding houses (New Zealand Government, 2015a).

4.4.2 Auckland Planning Context

The transition of Auckland City into one territorial authority is subject to the Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act 2010. There has been a requirement to make decisions over whether or not boarding house bylaws should be retained, and how boarding houses should be regulated under a single unitary authority. While the combined Auckland Council was established in 2010, regulation is fractured across the areas of former local authorities. At the time of writing, bylaws for Manakau, Auckland City, Takapuna and Waitakere remained operative while a bylaw review was in progress. One such example is the Auckland City Council Bylaw N. 4–Hostels (2008) intended to; *“Set standards for safety, ventilation, and sanitary conditions and to prevent overcrowding of these premises”* (Auckland Council, 2015b). This bylaw covers a range of premises including, boarding houses, guest houses, backpackers and motels, but excludes premises that are subject to licencing requirements such as, camping grounds and aged care facilities. It establishes the responsibilities of managers over matters such as hygiene, security, safety, prevention of overcrowding and the provision of facilities.

As part of the bylaw review process, and as a means of addressing the concerns of social service agencies, Auckland Council staff are in the process of carrying out a boarding house project in South Auckland. The project involves proactive inspections of premises using a joint regulatory approach incorporating environmental health, building inspection and consent officers from the Auckland Council. Input is also sought from Government agencies and non-governmental social service providers. It is probable that the remaining boarding house bylaws will be allowed to lapse, including Auckland City Council Bylaw N. 4 –Hostels (2008). It is intended that future issues will be dealt with through utilising existing legislation and implementing monitoring procedures along the lines of those used for the South Auckland Boarding House Project (Auckland Council, 2015).

4.4.3 Dunedin General Context

At the time of the 2013 census Dunedin had a population of 118,683, an increase of 1.6 percent from the previous Census in 2006. The median weekly rental price is \$280 NZD (Statistics New Zealand, 2015c). Many of Dunedin’s boarding houses are concentrated in the City Rise area (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). This is a residentially zoned area located on the fringe of the central business district. It is characterised by mixed tenancy types, transience, a higher than average concentration of rental properties, and single

person tenancies (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). Many of these properties occupy large Victorian and Edwardian homes reflecting more prosperous times (Dunedin City Council, 2015a). Dunedin's relatively stagnant economy in the ensuing years has resulted in the retention of much of the older housing in this neighbourhood, and relative affordability (Dunedin City Council, 2015a). The urban fringe areas of Dunedin have not been subject to the same gentrification trends that have occurred in other New Zealand cities, with less private and public sector investment outside of the urban core (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998). Boarding houses in the area are not purpose-built, but are the result adaptive use of large older dwellings. Gleeson Hay & Law (1998) suggests that many mental health service consumers live in this area, and that the concentration of residences and services for psychiatric patients resulted from deinstitutionalisation. This clustering is in line with international research, particularly North America where there has been similar deinstitutionalisation of services (Dear & Wolch, 1987). Gleeson Hay & Law (1998) suggested that NIMBY was a factor contributing to the concentration of residences for mental health consumers, including boarding houses in the City Rise area of Dunedin.

4.4.4 Dunedin Planning Context

The Dunedin District Plan gives very little specific recognition to boarding houses. Boarding houses intended for six or more guests or residents are defined as 'visitor accommodation' under the Dunedin Long Term Plan (Dunedin City Council, 2015b) and as a 'residential commercial activity' in the Dunedin District Plan (2006). In some residential zones boarding houses are a discretionary activity requiring a resource consent, while in others they are a permitted activity (Dunedin City Council, 2006). The Dunedin City Council does not currently have a boarding house bylaw. There are no current or recent policy initiatives in Dunedin that address boarding house issues. At the time of writing, the proposed Dunedin Second Generation Plan was open for submissions. Within the proposed plan, boarding houses are considered a 'standard residential' activity, and are defined as:

A residential activity where individual sleeping quarters are rented to boarders or lodgers, and facilities are provided for communal use by tenants. In some cases, services may be provided in the form of meals, cleaning or laundry

services. This definition excludes any activities defined as supported living facilities (Dunedin City Council, 2015c).

4.4.5 Comparisons of Case Study Areas

A housing supply shortfall in Auckland has created issues at the lower end of the rental market that are largely absent in Dunedin. Property prices in Auckland continue to climb significantly, while prices remain relatively static in Dunedin. Consequently, Auckland boarding house tenants are more likely to live in overcrowded and sub-standard conditions, and are more likely to be faced with homelessness than Dunedin tenants. Compared to Dunedin, Auckland has not experienced the same degree of clustering of boarding houses, with gentrification of the urban fringe and a dynamic property market limiting opportunities for affordable accommodation near the city centre (Baxter, 1996; Kearns & Joseph, 2000).

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has placed the current research in context, having explored boarding houses from a New Zealand perspective, and from the perspective of the Auckland and Dunedin case study areas. The planning and regulatory framework has been examined from central government legislation and policy initiatives, through to the planning provisions of the local authorities in the case study areas. Predominant themes and trends in New Zealand and the case study areas are reflective of much of what has been revealed in international literature on boarding houses. Boarding house numbers in New Zealand are difficult to estimate due to imprecise definitions. Boarding house tenants present a range of characteristics, but are more likely to exist at the lower end of the income spectrum, less likely to be employed and are far more likely to be single than is the case with the general population. The statutory provisions that boarding houses are regulated under in New Zealand are fragmented, weak and dated compared to some overseas examples. In practise, the regulation of boarding houses in New Zealand occurs on a compliant-based basis, and is carried out by local authorities acting under the provisions of district plans, bylaws and relevant central government legislation. Local authorities are empowered to create bylaws, rules, and policies specific to boarding houses, but this seldom occurs in New Zealand. An examination of the case study areas revealed some marked contrasts between the boarding house sectors of Auckland and Dunedin. Auckland housing market

conditions have contributed to issues such as homelessness and families living in boarding houses and has required the Auckland Council to consider proactive methods of compliance and enforcement. The serious issues that exist in Auckland do not occur to any great extent in Dunedin. Overall, Dunedin renters have better housing choices and there is less requirement for local government regulation than there is in Auckland.

5 RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results from the current research. The results presented are representative of the collective views of the research participants and include individual quotes that were elicited from the key informants during interviews. The results are presented in five main sections, reflecting the key themes that were determined by the literature review. Firstly, the results pertaining to boarding house tenants are presented, then the boarding house living environment, followed by planning issues and the regulatory framework. Finally, suggestions for regulatory and non-regulatory improvements are presented. These results were obtained from interviews with key informants, guided by the research questions, and from a survey of boarding house tenants. Using an open-ended questioning technique, the key informants were asked to characterise boarding house tenants and premises, to offer their perceptions on the current regulatory framework, and to suggest both regulatory and non-regulatory improvements to the private boarding house sector.

5.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF BOARDING HOUSE TENANTS

This section presents results relating to the key informants' perceptions of boarding house tenants, with a view to addressing a part of the first research question; "What issues and problems characterise boarding houses in New Zealand?" In order to address this question, the key informants were asked in interviews, "From your experience, what issues and problems can you identify that characterise boarding house tenants, and the boarding house living environment?" The results presented in this section cover the key informants' responses relating to tenant characteristics. This section also includes results from the Dunedin boarding house tenant survey relating to their length of tenancy and reasons for living in a boarding house.

5.2.1 Multifaceted and Interrelated Issues

The majority of the key informants of all backgrounds attribute particular vulnerabilities to the tenants of boarding houses, and these closely align with the key themes described in the literature on boarding houses, namely; mental health issues, homelessness and

transience, addiction, poor physical health and crime. It is also widely acknowledged by key informants in both locations, especially by social service workers, that these vulnerabilities do not occur in isolation. The issues facing many tenants are multifaceted, interrelated and can be compounded by the boarding house environment in which they live. Table 4 below presents a selection of key informant responses that describe the multiple and interrelated factors that can affect some boarding house tenants.

Table 4: Interrelated vulnerabilities of boarding house tenants
Vulnerable at every level; psychological level, physical level, social level, financial level, it just goes on [Key Informant 11]
They've normally got some issues whether its alcohol, drugs, perhaps live outside what we would deem normal society, they are transient, don't have any roots or deep seated roots and that's part of the problem really [Key informant 4]
I would say they have all had something happen in their lives that they have struggled to get up again. As such, they have had a kick in the backside or something, fallen down, and whether it's a marriage breakup or mental health, they've never managed to get their selves going again. Probably got mixed up in drugs and that's how they live their day, never gotten going and been able to thrive again properly [Key Informant 5]
They attract people who have mental health issues or addictions or criminal records who have difficulty getting or affording other accommodation. So people who end up in them can end up in quite volatile situations, and of course if you have addictions and you're around other people with addictions, it's not particularly helpful [Key Informant 1]
I've been visiting our families and we don't work with the singles, but most of them are under mental health. You see Corrections there picking up their clients and everyone looks so depressed. It's a depressing place. You can see quite a lot of elderly there now, that 55 plus age group. They perhaps can't get into the pensioner units [Key Informant 8]
There is a whole series of vulnerabilities that are going on in an individual's life as to why they are accessing a boarding house, so often it's a very limited income, usually on a benefit, but maybe working poor. Often there is some sort of other complex issue going on, like a history of bad tenancy, finding it hard to access long term tenancy. There could be mental health issues going on, there could be addiction issues going on, it could be a criminal history [Key Informant 10]
Generally speaking they're at the bottom of the housing market, they're the people without choice, most often they're people who have a number of interrelated problems, what the social workers call multifaceted problems. Most often they're around addictions, sometimes mental health issues as well, but also people being released from prisons. Sometimes they all go together which is a really toxic mix. Generally speaking single men, there are single women and sometimes single women who aren't necessarily demonstrating those things, but for some reason have few other housing options. What has happened and It is happening less now, is that parents with children are placed in those places [...] It's an environment where there's lots of shared space and very limited personal space and you've got a whole lot of people interacting in ways they probably wouldn't feel comfortable with, and so hence there

are all sorts of tensions and you have that mixed with mental health issues and alcohol and drug issues and probably unresolved issues around violence and behavioural problems make a toxic mix [Key informant 15]

Figure 4 below depicts the multifaceted nature of problems and issues that some boarding house tenants are faced with. As described by the key informants, these factors can interact and compound, creating a cycle that is hard to break.



Figure 4: Multifaceted and interrelated vulnerabilities of boarding house tenants

5.2.2 Mental Health Issues

Several of the key informants, particularly those with social service roles, identified mental health issues among some boarding house tenants as a significant issue. In particular, boarding houses are seen as an environment that is poorly suited to people affected by mental illness, and as detrimental to effective treatment. There were concerns expressed that alternative accommodation options for people with mental illness are limited. Table 5 below lists key informant comments relating to boarding house tenants with mental illness.

Table 5: Comments on boarding house tenants with mental illness
There is a real dearth of accommodation for people with mental illness, and it aggravates the mental illness. Certainly boarding houses are no place for them [Key Informant 15]
A lot of the clients have mental health issues and that combination in a boarding house, if you've got people who are not working, people who are not coping then it's a recipe for

chaos. It's very difficult for some of them to be locked up in their rooms with nothing to do and nowhere to go. Their options are very limited [Key Informant 3]
If you don't have family and friends you're on a hiding to nothing especially if you've got a mental health issue. It's not a natural situation to have a whole lot of people in one, and they're not big places really. You've got your own little room, but at the same time it's not the way any of us would want to live [Key Informant 2]
It can be a quite dangerous place to live in some circumstances and not necessarily good for ongoing mental health [Key Informant 1]

5.2.3 Transience and Homelessness

In characterising the nature of boarding house tenants, the key informant's frequently eluded to transience and a history of homelessness:

They normally tend to be people who are transient and they don't tend to stay a long time. Conversely though, there are people who stay a long time. They normally have difficulty finding suitable accommodation and being accepted by the landlords for long term, fixed term accommodation [Key Informant 4]

Boarding houses are also acknowledged as one of the few options for housing those that are 'sleeping rough' or living without shelter. Key Informants 10 and 11 work with the homeless in Auckland, a role that includes helping people living without shelter to access boarding house accommodation. According to Key Informant 10; *"often the first option of rough sleepers is a boarding house, or they might do a quick stint in what we call emergency accommodation and then go into boarding houses."* Key Informant 10 described the characteristics of rough sleepers in Auckland as; *"overwhelmingly male across a whole age range from 16-17 right through to late 80s. Primarily the people that we deal with are single or in a transitory relationship."* As a social worker dealing with the homeless in Auckland, Key Informant 11 believed that finding accommodation for the homeless was difficult due to a shortage of suitable housing, and that there could be a stigma attached to them that made it difficult for them to access housing; *"we don't get hundreds of landlords ringing us up and saying we have a 40 percent vacancy. They also don't ring us because they don't want our clients."*

5.2.4 Addiction

There is recognition among the key informants that the boarding house environment is not a particularly suitable environment for people who suffer from addictions. According

to Key Informant 3; *“by yourself there are options, but if you’re living in house with people that are all wanting to go and have a drink or go out and socialise, it’s hard to resist when you’ve got no other options”*; and Key Informant 1; *“of course if you have addictions and you’re around other people with addictions, it’s not particularly helpful.”* Few key informants commented on addiction in isolation, but it received a lot of mention as an interrelating factor.

5.2.5 Physical Health

Some Auckland key informants mentioned physical health concerns arising from the boarding house environment, but there was no mention of physical health concerns from the respondents in Dunedin. Table 6 below shows key informant responses describing physical health issues in Auckland boarding houses.

Table 6: Physical health issues in Auckland
We have often heard stories of bed bugs and vermin, and talking about a vulnerable population whose health is fragile and stories of weapons and knives. Certainly not a place where I’d want children or any kind of vulnerability [Key Informant 10]
They also get sick because the house isn’t up to standard, that’s what we’re finding for our families [Key Informant 16]
There are so many skin rashes on the children. A lot of families [will have] noodles and bread and butter and tea and coffee, but you can’t really cook anything else. Some of the families go to the swimming pool so that they can take the kids for a swim and shower there [Key Informant 8]

5.2.6 Released Prisoners in Boarding Houses

Of the key informants for this research, four are employees of the Prisoner Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS), with a responsibility for facilitating the placement of released prisoners into housing. The significance of issues facing released prisoners in boarding houses are summarised by Key Informant 6; *“We are probably dealing with the most marginalised boarding house tenant you can imagine.”* Due to their character, limited financial means and marginalisation, some released prisoners have few options other than to live in single room occupancy accommodation. Boarding houses are often the only accommodation they can access. The PARS employees provided an account of the interrelating and multi-faceted characteristics of ex-prisoners that access boarding houses, for example Key Informant 6 stated:

Bad credit, difficulty managing their money, obviously with our clientele there's the criminal history, predominantly ethnic, Māori or Pacific Islanders, lack of ID, on a benefit and lack of credit. They're generally people that have burnt their bridges, either with their family or their friends, or character types that people wouldn't invite them in.

There is a general acceptance among the key informants that released prisoners have limited housing choices, and this situation is compounded in Auckland by rising prices and increasing housing demand. Housing and rehabilitating the large volume of released prisoners in the Auckland area, is according to some key informants particularly challenging in the current environment:

It's really hard for released prisoners to find a place. Now we've got the new Northern Correctional Facility over in Wiri with 900 odd beds. Within a 50-60km radius you have 25 percent of the countries prison population. You don't have rehabilitation contracts in Auckland like elsewhere, in Christchurch for example. The problem is of course, it's tough for released prisoners to not reoffend if the only option they've got is to go back to where they started, and some of course have burnt their bridges and there is no returning to where they came from because of the harm they've caused. Effectively that's not particularly helpful for them [Key Informant 15]

Some of them will tell us, "I want my own apartment." My own apartment is not realistic and what we do is defuse that reality to them in digestible chunks, because often they come out from prison and they have all these ideas and expectations of what they can achieve, and the reality is to get something by the end of the day it's a boarding house. [Key Informant 6]

It is acknowledged by the key informants with a responsibility for housing released prisoners that the environment can be unsuitable for rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. The particular mix of people and the living environment of boarding houses can have detrimental effects on released prisoners as reflected in the comments below in Table 7.

Table 7: Comments relating to released prisoners in boarding houses
You are pretty much taking them back to what they know as an environment and they go “why should I try.” That’s probably the biggest issue about what we do in terms of trying to reintegrate people [key informant 6]
It’s just like being in prison really. It’s an unnatural situation and you’ve got a whole lot of testosterone filled people rattling round with nothing to do with their time. It’s not a natural situation, and they’re not big places really. You’ve got your own little room, but at the same time it’s not the way any of us would want to live. [...] They often go back to what they know which is crime. They’re bored, they have no money so they mix with the people that they know and they slip back into their old ways, not because they necessarily want to, but it’s very hard to cope when you’ve got no money and no friends and nothing to do [Key Informant 2]
The clientele that we work with, it’s more than likely that they will end up in a boarding house and over the years that I’ve been working here I’ve seen an extreme from one end to the other, really good boarding houses, and on the other hand really bad boarding houses which doesn’t help our clientele to reduce recidivism [Key Informant 7]

Key Informant 3 had concerns about the limited housing choices available for released prisoners in Dunedin, and suggested that released prisoners could have improved access to social housing:

Housing New Zealand can help, but the criteria is so stringent and let’s face it, even in Dunedin they have many houses sold off. The DCC (Dunedin City Council) will not consider our clients. We are very annoyed about that. If we go along and ask on behalf of our clients they refuse, but if the client had enough between his ears to go along and do it themselves and tell lies the council wouldn’t know. If he was to go along with a reference from someone, the council would put him in there and he’d be right for the next ten years, but because we ask it’s “no.”

Key Informant 3 believed that housing choices for ex-prisoners are further limited by a lack of financial means on their release; “*When people get released there’s not much money, that’s when they have no option really, they are not going to get into a flat with \$350.*” \$350 NZD is the set limit of the ‘steps to freedom’ payment allocated to prisoners on their release. A lack of family support, and support of friends are considered factors that compound issues and problems faced by released prisoners. Key Informant 2 suggested; “*If you don’t have family and friends you’re on a hiding to nothing, especially if you’ve got a mental health issue.*” Key Informant 6 attributes changes to the *Parole*

Act 2002, resulting in additional monitoring requirements, to an increase in the number of released prisoners accessing boarding house accommodation:

The Parole Act was rewritten and they have to be monitored for an extra three months. There was an explosion in the need for boarding houses because they can't just go and stay with their mates, it has to be approved by probation. It's just an address for the purposes of the Act.

5.2.7 Women and Families in Boarding Houses

Families living in boarding houses was a prominent area of concern identified by the Auckland social service workers interviewed for this research. According to Key Informant 10:

There is a growing access by families with children into boarding houses and that represents much of the housing crisis that we have. That is really an indication of a growing poverty in New Zealand.

This trend is seen as a largely unintended consequence of housing market pressures. Marginalised families can be left with no other option than to reside in single room occupancy boarding houses. Among the key informants, there were five social workers from the Salvation Army and the Monte Cecelia Trust with the responsibility of finding accommodation for low-income families. These key informants acknowledge that boarding houses are unsuitable for families at many levels, but are reluctantly involved in the placement of families into boarding houses due to a lack of alternatives. Table 8 below presents comments from the key informants relating to families in boarding houses.

Table 8: Comments on Families in Boarding Houses
<p>These are the families that we work with and they are actually languishing while living in these boarding houses, so we do home visits, look around, assess their housing needs. We usually house them in the boarding houses, or they go into our emergency housing. [...] They're lower socio-economic families, low incomes, those that don't have jobs, that are low income earners, or single mothers. A lot of families are discriminated against trying to get into the private sector, so you've got a lot of our Pacific Island and Māori families there, yet when you work with those families they have the same type of hope and aspirations as any other families, but they don't have a house. That is when we start to see our families go down. It is a depressing place to stay in and they don't seem to be able to move from there. They are stuck. Without any type of assistance from someone supporting these families to move they would languish there for quite a while [Key Informant 8]</p>

There's just not enough facilities to cater to families, because a few of them have been closed down here in South Auckland in particular, so we could probably name on one hand how many suitable facilities there are. When I have to put a family in one of these lodges, you have to weigh up the background, because there are some lodges that cater to certain people. I explain to the families this is the best out of the worst. Gone are the days that they could be evicted at eleven o'clock and we could get them into private housing by the afternoon. In the past three months one of the trends we have seen is evictions, and for these families the only places available are the lodges, the boarding houses [Key Informant 16]

We wouldn't recommend them for families, however we are not able to get them in to the private sector. We have had no choice but to place them there temporarily and keep trying and telling them to keep trying also. When it's about singles they can cope because they're able, but for families and children it isn't somewhere for them to be living [Key Informant 17]

Some Auckland key informants had first-hand experience of observing families living in crowded circumstances in boarding houses. According to Key Informant 16; *"when you have a couple and nine children to rent two rooms it becomes unaffordable for them."* A lack of housing affordability is forcing large families to live in a single room occupancy situation. The research identified situations where landlords are advertising single room accommodation as 'family rooms', as demonstrated by Key Informant 8:

They pay for one room, it varies from \$180 to \$320 for one room, so you get what they call a family room. It's Mum and Dad and up to five children, one double bed and one single bed. Usually families are still on the floor. We've had a mum and seven children in one of those family rooms and she said that the four younger children were put on the double bed and her and the other children were on the floor.

The requirement for families to live in boarding houses also raised safety concerns among the key informants around the appropriateness of the use of shared facilities by families living in boarding houses:

Shared communal in regard to kitchen, showers, toilets; they're really substandard, like a lot of the showers don't have doors, toilets don't have doors, they're unisex, you get singles, you get couples in there, you get alcoholics, drug addicts those that are on home detention, you get a real mixture and then you've got our vulnerable families [Key Informant 8]

Shared facilities, that's a great thing for meeting other people, but we have all types of people access boarding homes and it's not good for children. Some of

them don't have regulations and children are there to sight these things, and police get called so it's just not suitable and that's our main concern. What do we do? [Key Informant 17]

Another concerning aspect of families in boarding houses described by key informants, is the length of stay that some families are having to endure. While families living in boarding house accommodation may be viewed as a short-term or emergency provision, tenancies can become far longer than intended:

They are staying in these places for up to two years and if we don't come along, I've had a family in there for three or four years. It's because they can't access the private sector or they're waiting for social housing [Key Informant 8].

Despite the key informants' reservations about placing families in boarding houses, the alternatives can be even more dismal, and can include families living in cars:

We always say to our families do not sleep in a car, put the children somewhere because if we find you were going to get CYF (Child Youth and Family) involved, we're going to get the police involved, so children in effect get split up because of what's going on [Key Informant 17]

Our issue in south Auckland is mainly families. We're dealing with homeless families. We just had a caravan park closed up the road [...] we've had families sleeping in a vehicle because they have nowhere else to go. We're very careful vetting because there are people out there that will take advantage of our families [Key Informant 18]

Key Informant 15 acknowledged the problems associated with children in boarding houses, but believes there are fewer placements of families with children into boarding houses than was previously the case:

What has happened, and It is happening less now, is that parents with children are placed in those places and certainly what happens around here, work and income who have to pay the bills for this are very reluctant to put kids into boarding houses, because they think that they are at risk. Generally speaking if kids are put into boarding houses they're taken out pretty quick because of the risks that it poses for them.

5.2.8 Boarding House Tenant Perspectives

Four boarding house tenants were interviewed as part of the research, and a total of ten tenants participated in a brief survey designed to elicit information about their tenancy and perceptions of their living environment. Of the tenants interviewed, two had also previously resided in Auckland boarding house premises. In comparing their experiences of living in boarding houses in both Auckland and Dunedin, Key Informants 19 and 24 both spoke negatively about the Auckland premises they had lived in, but were more positive about their current circumstances living in boarding houses in Dunedin.

I find this one down here you get a lot more for your money than I was up in Ellerslie, and it's friendlier. I get on with the landlord and don't have any problems with him. With the one up there the conditions of the rooms weren't as good and you weren't looked after the way you're supposed to be looked after in a boarding home. [...] The conditions of the buildings in the one that I was in wasn't up to standard, if it was me I would have condemned that place. This one here, I quite like it here. I work for the landlord. You don't get many landlords like that giving the tenants jobs [Key Informant 19]

I was living in Auckland for seven years. I've been to the homeless shelter in Newmarket, I've been in Odyssey house twice. I've been living on the street on and off at different parts of my life. The [boarding house] in South Central, I was there for six months and in that time there was three stabbings, assaults on a regular basis. There was a lot of people smoking out of light bulbs, if you know what I mean. [...] After paying my rent and expenses I have \$140 left. With boarding houses, the deal is you pay more for rent, but your power is free that's where you benefit. The boarding houses are actually a cheaper option than a flat and I'm quite comfortable here. We've got a good section of the house here and we are quite safe here. I don't actually survive too bad, I pay \$190 rent and after that I'm left with \$140. There's no insecurity about losing your room if you're not doing anything wrong [the Landlord] is not going to walk in here and say you're out if I haven't done nothing wrong. [Key informant 24]

Key Informant 20 was also well settled and satisfied with their living conditions. As a long-term resident they saw themselves as having an informal management role which included some responsibilities around security, cash handling, and cooking:

I've been living here about seven years and it is the first boarding house I've lived in. I'm happy with things here, everything's ten minutes down the road, plus I'm also the cook here, I'm in charge of the master key for the rooms and I've got a TV and a decoder. I hang onto money if people are paying cash for the room they give it to me and I give it to the landlord, I'm pretty well trusted. They call me the manager, I keep an eye on things around here if there's a problem I ring (the landlord) or the police. [...] I rang the cops over a guy that came up tried to bash me up and the other guys bashed him up. It's the randoms that come up here that cause the trouble, other people they might know the tenants and think they can just wander in. We keep the doors locked at all times. [Key Informant 20]

Boarding House Tenant Survey

As part of the research, ten Dunedin boarding house tenants from two separate premises completed an eight question survey [see Appendix B]. The survey was intended to obtain an insight into the tenants' perspectives of their living environment, to ascertain information about their tenancy, and to discover their reason for accessing boarding house accommodation. Question 1 of the survey relating to how long the tenants' have been in their current accommodation is presented below in figure 5.

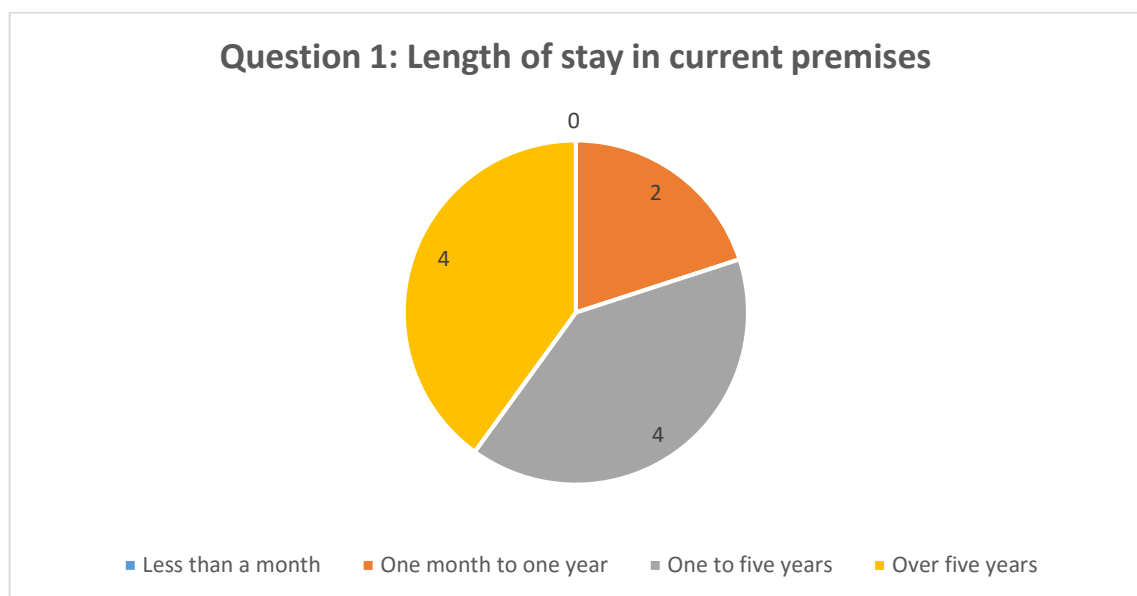


Figure 5: Length of stay in premises

In Question 2 of the survey, respondents were asked: “Where else have you lived in the last five years?” Four tenants were unable to answer this question as they had lived in their current boarding house for five years or more. Five had lived in private homes, two

had lived in other boarding houses, one had been in prison, one had been in a hospital or institution, and one had lived in supported accommodation within the previous five years.

Question 3 asked the tenants to choose one or more reasons for accessing boarding house accommodation. Among the Dunedin tenants sampled, all of them identified affordability as a reason for living in a boarding house. Five tenants (50 percent) identified convenience and two tenants (20 percent) identified companionship as reasons for living in a boarding house. With some tenants identifying convenience and companionship, it can be inferred that they are exercising elements of choice in living in a boarding house.

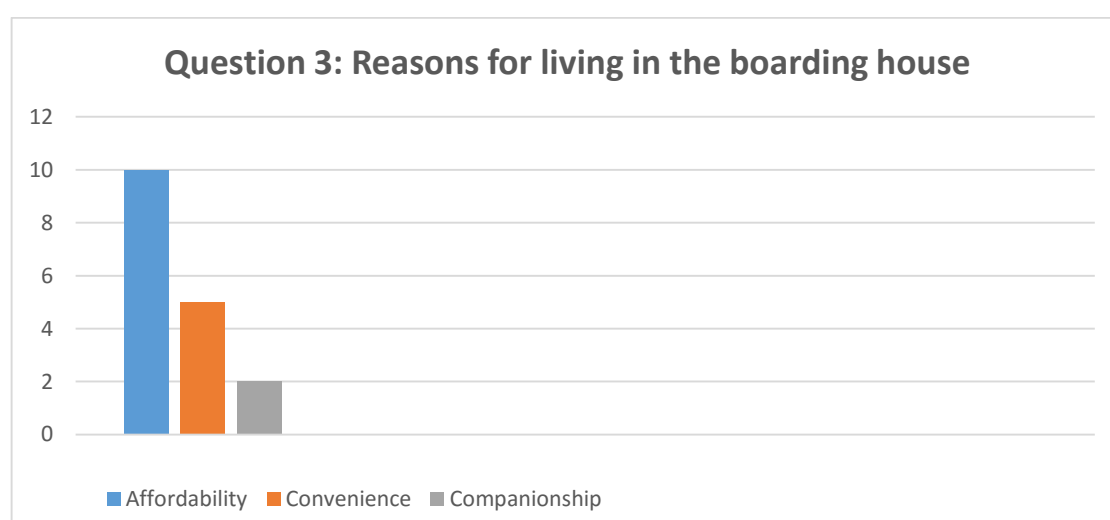


Figure 6: Reasons for living in a boarding house

The results of these questions suggest that boarding house tenants from Dunedin questioned for the survey were relatively settled. Any suggestions that boarding house tenants are transient or homeless do not appear to apply to the Dunedin respondents of the survey. However, it is possible that there is an inherent bias in the survey results, as the survey only included willing participants.

5.2.9 Comparisons of Auckland and Dunedin Tenants

When asked what characterises boarding house tenants, Auckland key informants described a wider range of factors than their Dunedin counterparts. There was a broad array of tenant characteristics described, which included not only those that were marginalised. According to Key Informant 13; *“It is a complete mix of population from the people that really have very good jobs, to people that are battling and everybody in between”* and Key Informant 12; *“For most people it is a form of accommodation, so you*

have a complete mixture of people.” Key Informant 14 expanded further in describing boarding house tenants; *“There’s families, there’s singles, people that work, people that don’t work, there’s people with government support, people without government support, people in between employment and support, people that are ill and not so ill.”* Auckland-based key informants were more likely to place their answers in the context of Auckland’s housing market conditions where a scarcity of housing limits accommodation choices, forcing people to seek options at lower ends of the market. According to Key Informant 16, a social service worker; *“to us it’s the last resort. If we can try to utilise and access other resources we would, but unfortunately there’s not enough houses out there.”*

Dunedin key informants tended to focus more on vulnerabilities such as mental illness, addiction and a tendency towards crime; but also included those who are down on their luck as suggested by Key Informant 23, a Dunedin boarding house tenant:

Not everyone here is a drug person or a victim of society in a way that they’re mentally ill there are some that have ended up here because [...] you just reach a certain age where you can’t start again.

Key Informant 22, a Dunedin landlord suggested that the type of people residing in boarding houses had changed:

The people that are coming through now are not the people that came through when I took over 14 years ago. The people coming through are 22-23 year old feral young people. They’ll steal your TV, they don’t care, they’re definitely going downhill and where are they’re going to go?

5.3 THE BOARDING HOUSE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

This section presents results relating to the key informants’ perceptions of the boarding house living environment, with a view to addressing a part of the first research question; “What issues and problems characterise boarding houses in New Zealand?” In order to address this question, the key informants were asked in an interview, “From your experience, what issues and problems can you identify that characterise boarding house tenants, and the boarding house living environment?” The results presented in this section cover the key informants’ responses relating to the living environment of boarding

houses. This section also includes results from the Dunedin boarding house tenant survey relating to living environment.

5.3.1 Building Conditions

Across all key informant groups, participants were concerned about the conditions of boarding house buildings, particularly in Auckland. The following comments in Table 9 describe general aspects of building conditions and standards that were observed by the key informants.

Table 9: Descriptions of building conditions and standards
It was \$180 a week, it was like a chicken hut or a kids playroom, it was up on one concrete block, you stepped into it through a creaky ranch slider, it had one little window and the mattress was on concrete, no base. This is in winter and an extension cord running to the room. One of the most often used quotes is; "I wouldn't let my dog live in that" and this time I agree with that. It's got to be illegal, but it's going on and they're prepared to take money from Work and Income [Key Informant 6]
The stench of urine when you walked in hit you in the face, everything was black mould and I went round the corner to the kitchen, there wasn't a single jib-board panel that wasn't kicked in or ripped open. [Key Informant 6]
The premises that we work with, the structure of the buildings, it's the old mental health hospital. It used to be Mangere Hospital. It was built in the early 1950s. No maintenance has been done on them. It's the old wards, very small rooms, very little money has been spent on getting any type of maintenance work done on those buildings [...] I think it's mismanagement to allow these buildings to deteriorate, I don't understand it [Key Informant 8]
They do mushroom, investors that have bought a house in a street, you wouldn't know until we get called up and they go, it's a boarding house and you walk around and they've got all these porta coms at the back [Key Informant 8]
Some of them had carried out some structural alterations without consent, added to increased intensity without the proper consent and that impacts on fire safety and overcrowding and the like. In quite a few we'd found they'd brought in quite a few caravans as well as additional accommodation. [Key Informant 13]
What we experienced with the 20 boarding houses is that none of them were purpose built. They were either residential homes that had been converted, or previous government hospitals, or something like that. Nothing was purpose-built, so they are quite a mixed match of quality and design and standards. Overall standards weren't of a great standard, so multiple breaches of current legislation. Fire regulation breaches, no fire hoses, emergency lighting not in place sprinklers that don't work smoke doors that are locked or penetration through the smoke doors, additional spaces made into additional bed rooms and cupboards in the bed rooms [Key informant 14]

Some of them are pretty big, the ones over in Mangere, literally there's wards of an old hospital that are now boarding houses. They would have 20 or 30 rooms in a block, they are massive things. Many others are just old houses rented on a room by room basis, some of the rooms aren't actually rooms. They are just makeshift bits and pieces and stuff like that. More recently we've come across an operation that is running as emergency housing, not as a boarding house, but it is a boarding house. It's one family per room and there are examples where two families shared a garage. It's as desperate as that [...] Some of the boarding houses, particularly in Papatoetoe, they are pretty awful places and sometimes the practices are so bad that you have to blow the whistle on them and let the council know that there is an illegal boarding house in operation. Some of the practises get so risky and harmful that as a social service agent you can't just forget about it [Key Informant 15]
When we used to go in and inspect them for our families they were up to par at least. But in the last couple of years in the last two, three years it has deteriorated because of the increase in rent. Whatever the changes were the boarding homes are not keeping up to their standard and then we're finding it's not suitable for families [Key informant 17]

5.3.2 Facilities

Along with the generally poor building standards that were described, some Auckland social service workers singled out the facilities of the premises as being of a less than an acceptable standard, and poorly suited to the needs of boarding house tenants. Table 10 below shows key informants comments on boarding house facilities.

Table 10: Comments on facilities
I think there is about one stove in one of the kitchens, no two stoves but ones working, that's supposed to cater for up to 42 families. There's five toilets and maybe three of them are out of order, it could be for a while, it's like a third world, it's shocking. I've heard some of the single rooms were \$180 to \$210, then you go up the scale, \$280 to \$380 has been the highest. You don't get your monies worth let's say. The kitchens, because they are so substandard they don't cook in them they actually take their little burners into their rooms. There was some exit doors that I was having a look at, you couldn't get them open, they had chains on them. A few of the bedrooms have been painted, but I think what the families are looking for is improvements in the showers and the toilets [Key Informant 8]
There are knock on effects, for example people won't cook in the kitchens, so they buy takeaways and that affects them financially. You don't want to put your food in that environment [Key informant 9]
Shared communal in regard to kitchen, showers, toilets, they're really substandard like a lot of the showers don't have doors, toilets don't have doors, they're unisex, you get singles, you get couples in there you get alcoholics, drug addicts, those that are on home detention. You get a real mixture and then you've got our vulnerable families [Key Informant 8]

5.3.3 Fire Safety

Concerns around fire risk featured prominently among the key informants, and some acknowledged the potential for a mass casualty fire in a boarding house premises. Table

11 below shows an assortment of comments of key informants in relation to their concerns about fire safety in boarding houses.

Table 11: Fire safety concerns
You see these caravans, they are really old and run down, you see all these cords going into the main house and there's a potential fire or someone getting electrocuted so that's been happening and has been happening for a while. I would hate to see if there was ever a fire, because the managers don't check those rooms to see if they're cooking in them. They smoke a lot, there's a lot of smokers ash trays are overflowing. [Key informant 8]
To be honest I'm waiting for a major fire and there's a lot of people killed it's kind of a 'Cave Creek' of the boarding house, and I really don't want this to happen at the cost of someone's life [Key Informant 10]
Fire regulation breaches, no fire hoses, emergency lighting not in place, sprinklers that don't work smoke doors that are locked or penetration through the smoke doors [Key Informant 14 – on observations made during inspections]
You know there's one waiting for a multiple fatality accident, multiple lives lost in a fire [Key informant 21]

5.3.4 Overcrowding

The research revealed anecdotal indications of overcrowding within some Auckland boarding house premises. While crowding can be regulated through provisions such as the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947*, the research from the current study suggests that in some cases these regulations are not being adhered to by landlords. It was also revealed that Auckland Council environmental health officers and planners have difficulty in assessing the extent of overcrowding, or gathering evidence for enforcement. Table 12 below refers to comments that key informants made in relation to overcrowding in boarding house premises.

Table 12: Comments on overcrowding of premises
Overcrowding, we looked at it. We didn't too much at the time we did inspections, because most of the tenants were gone. If you look at the average occupants versus room size, we didn't establish significant overcrowding. What we noticed was the intensity has increased, more rooms, more caravans and the like, but anecdotally we get feedback from social agencies that overcrowding is an issue, but during this trial we didn't pick up any significant overcrowding issues that's not to say that it doesn't exist. Lots of people are away during the day when we do the inspections and how exactly do you do it, it is hard. [Key Informant 13]
I guess another characteristic is that they were pretty much all at full capacity or well over full capacity, with zero capacity left for people to go to. [Key Informant 14]

People throw solutions around like count the number of shoes, count the number of pillows, but when we get on site it's very difficult unless you're looking at dawn raids or something [Key Informant 14 - on assessing boarding house overcrowding]

It's Mum and Dad and up to five children, one double bed and one single bed. Usually families are still on the floor. We've had a mum and seven children in one of those family rooms and she said that the four younger children were put on the double bed and her and the other children were on the floor [Key informant 8]

5.3.5 Tenant Perceptions of Living Environment

Questions 4 to 7 of the Dunedin boarding house survey related to the tenants' perceptions of their boarding house environment. The results presented in figures 7 and 8 below suggest that tenants of boarding houses in the Dunedin case study area are satisfied with the condition of the premises they live in, and mostly feel safe living in that environment.

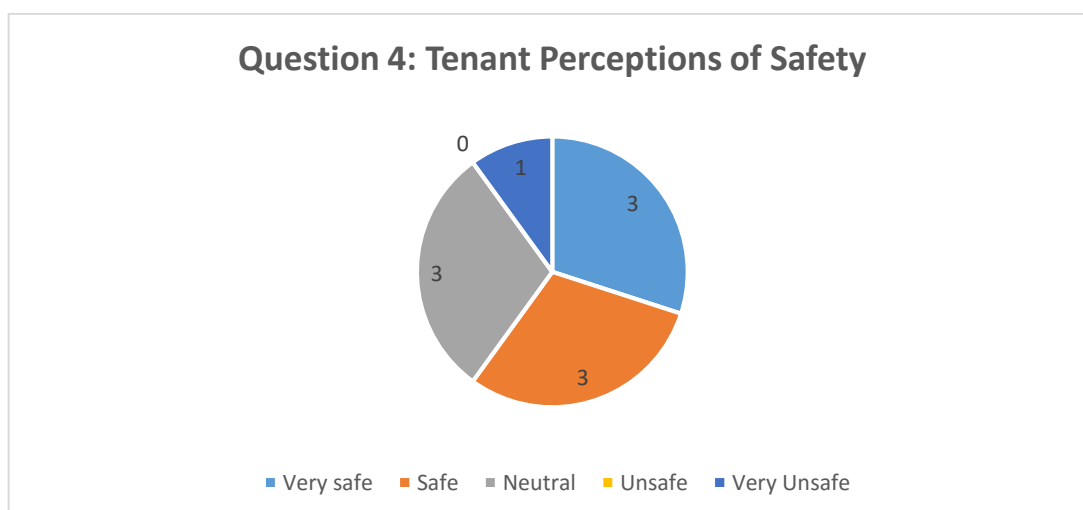


Figure 7: Tenant Perceptions of Safety

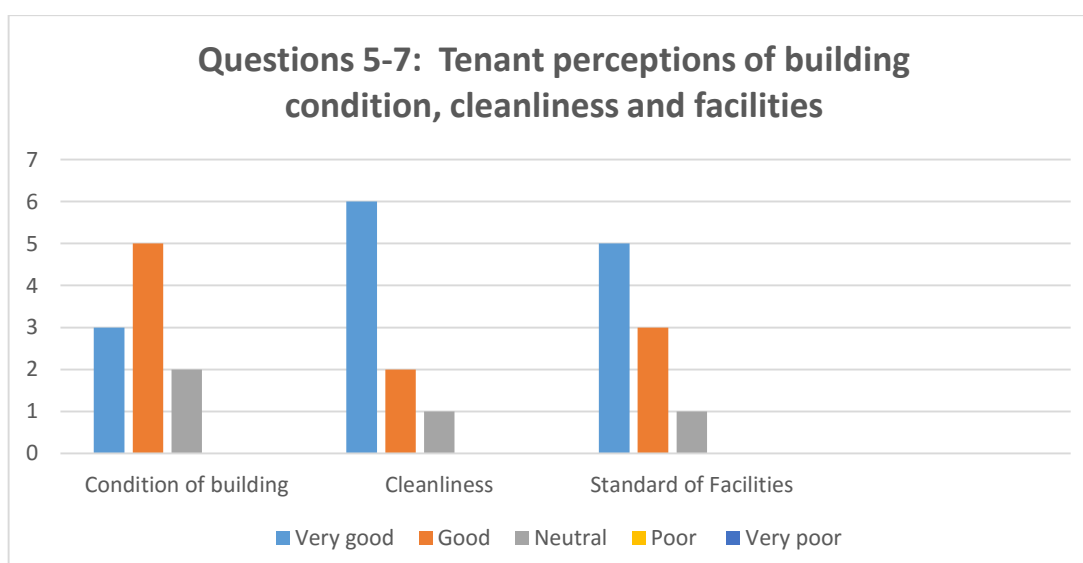


Figure 8: Tenant perceptions of building condition, cleanliness, and standard of facilities

5.3.6 Perceptions of Landlords and Managers

The research found that the key informants’ opinions on boarding house landlords and managers varied. Dunedin key informants, including boarding house tenants had an overwhelmingly positive view of landlords. When asked as part of the Dunedin survey if they felt comfortable speaking to a manager or the landlord about a problem with a boarding house, all ten tenants replied that they did. This was a somewhat surprising result, as much of the literature suggests that boarding house tenants do not feel comfortable complaining to managers or landlords. The results of this question reaffirms the high regard in which Dunedin landlords are held in by social service workers.

From a perspective of Auckland social service workers, it was suggested that some landlords are clearly better than others. As a result of the housing market conditions, obtaining housing access for some marginalised people is difficult, and is often dependent on landlords having a sense of social responsibility. Key Informant 10, an Auckland social service worker, acknowledges the complex issues faced by landlords and managers of boarding houses:

A boarding house has actually been created as an answer whether we like it or not to the housing situation we have, so it is a quasi-social housing without any understanding, background, support, accountability transparency to that end

Tables 13 and 14 below show the key informants opinions on boarding house landlords and managers, and highlights some of the contrasting opinions between respondents in the Auckland and Dunedin case study areas.

Table 13: Auckland key informant perceptions of landlords and managers
The management is not a therapeutic management, there is no support as such. The manager may or may not live on site and if there is a dispute they will ring the police [Key Informant 15]
There was domestic violence unfolding in the carpark before our eyes and the landlord was sitting in the car she said, “you show me money.” It astounds me because there are very good ones that ring us and say there’s an available room. Now we are very careful about the type of client we take there [...] Too many people have mucked it up here for our clientele and they are in a position where they don’t need to look for people. There’s more than enough, there’s so many foreign students. They say they don’t need us anymore because they have foreign students who pay on time, they don’t damage the place and they are respectful of other tenants [Key informant 6]

Table 14: Dunedin key informant perceptions of landlords and managers
In Dunedin we are pretty lucky in a sense that we've got three or four landlords that cater for that kind of transient element [Key Informant 4]
We are very fortunate in Dunedin in the calibre of landlords that we've got. It's very high. They're very helpful. They have a social sort of an outlook. It's not just money. [...] I hate to use term blessed for goodness sake it sounds almost religious, we are very fortunate that we do have this core of providers that we know we can rely on. Even if the person themselves are unreliable, they still take them. Although some of the accommodation itself isn't that wonderful, thinking about one particular area, but if this person didn't take them nobody else would [Key Informant 2]
What you tend to find though is these boarding house landlords and the people who live in them become their family in some ways. In some aspects they become their own little community, but that's just my observations and what I think. And they all know each other or they have got some idea who they are but the landlords themselves, the people I've come across, are well meaning and do care for these individuals. They look after them, they might take them shopping and take them to their doctor's appointments. It might actually form some sort of social service. That sounds a bit bizarre because some of these people do not have the ability to cope with what you and I would deem as normal everyday living. One boarding house manager has arranged so that the individuals all put in money so they have a meal and he helps them prepare it so they have a hot meal at night say four nights a week or five nights a week, that's quite good because a lot of these people don't have that well balanced meal type situation [Key Informant 4]
I think sometimes what ends up happening in boarding houses is that the owner doesn't really manage them, they put a longstanding tenant in as manager who has no real knowledge of the law, or any real background and sometimes the power goes to their head, and occasionally I've been known to give advice in those circumstances. The boarding house tenants that are having problems with those people when I have managed to get in touch with the owner, they are very reasonable and say they will sort it out, and I guess it's about keeping costs down they get to stay there rent free probably for doing that work for them, but there still needs to be ongoing proper management, not just leaving it all up to someone who is not up to the job. [Key Informant 1]

5.3.7 Landlord Perspectives

Among the key informants there were two landlords interviewed, both from Dunedin. They provided an insight into their particular role of operating boarding houses and dealing with the needs of their tenants. Both landlords would offer additional support to their tenants, including assistance with meal preparation and help with transport, so that their tenants could attend medical appointments and purchase food. The landlords described some of the difficulties they faced with problematic tenants, and some of the financial costs involved in operating boarding houses that some of the other key informants may not have been aware of. Neither landlord had an appointed manager, and

took it on themselves to assume the day to day management of their establishments. Table 15 below presents comments of Dunedin landlords.

Table 15: Perspectives of Dunedin boarding house landlords
I try to keep cleaners and the tenants to sort of tell me what's going on. I also get rid of all my trouble makers and that makes it easier too. [...] I try to grade my houses a bit and put my better tenants in better places that are quiet. I have one place where all the tenants are over 40, it's quieter. You don't always get it right and it's also a business. At times you have to put people in rooms that you don't really want to. The downside of that is when you put those people in rooms your good tenants can also leave. You have to be a bit careful on that one [Key Informant 5]
It's better here in Dunedin, affordable, but my rates on the buildings are \$11,000 per year and I pay my own water, it's about \$2000 dollars and [building inspection] about \$1000, and then I get rid of all the trash and that's about \$800 a year. So it's continuous and if something breaks, TV I go and buy another one. If the kettle breaks, microwave I buy another one, so to set up a room carpet and painting and the wiring if it's been done, it's still \$4000 to \$5000 and then you can get one bad tenant that can destroy it all in three minutes [Key Informant 22]
I try and look after my tenants. In one of my places I supply meals which I have kept pretty quiet [...] I was getting my rooms broken into and their mates would break into the next door rooms and steal food out of the fridges, so I started supplying meals and that all just stops it's been really going well. It's actually really nice they get one big meal five nights a week and the tenants are doing very well from it. Most of them keep half the meals for the next day. I supply my guys with TVs. I charge them \$5 a week for it and at the end of two years they own the TV. You've got to try and look after them and try and keep them happy. In saying that I get a lot of TVs go missing [Key Informant 5]

5.3.8 Auckland Housing Issues

A common theme that emerged from the key informants in Auckland was the impact of a lack of housing affordability on the financial security and quality of life on residents. The portion of income spent on rent can leave tenants with very little left to cover other expenses. As housing becomes scarcer and rents rise, boarding house operators are able to be more selective about who they offer accommodation to, at the expense of marginalised groups. At the time of the research rents were continuing to rise, causing a great deal of difficulty for tenants and concern among social service providers. Table 16 below presents an assortment of key informant views on Auckland housing issues.

Table 16: Key informant views on Auckland housing market
The market is determining it. What I'm seeing is the market knows full well what it can recover in rent costs and it's all priced to the maximum allowable amounts for the accommodation allowance from WINZ. I know of guys that are living on \$60 a week or less for everything [Key Informant 6]

Part of the problem is there is not a lot of space for anything. There's a lot of pressure on all the land and the market goes to the highest bidder and the highest bidder isn't the people we're talking about [Key Informant 15]
It is not always that they are unemployed. Either they've gone from fulltime and their time has actually dropped to part time, or they have lost their job. It isn't just our beneficiary families it's also our working class families and you are looking at three months and then they increase the rent again. [Key Informant 17]
Low incomes, bad credit rating and this is a lot of the problem, because even if we did have the homes they don't have the facility to get back into a home. That's the difficulty and that's why we have got such an overcrowding problem in South Auckland, because a lot of the families live together and then the landlord comes along and says this is not how it should be, so you've got so many days to get these two or three families out and then they come here, and they don't have credit and it's a matter of affordability and that's the way it is. There is just not enough affordable housing for those families and not all of them don't work. Some of them are low income families, but they're struggling because in Auckland the rents are so high, and we've got people lining up to look at homes, and if the landlord has a tenant that can pay and is on a better income and has a good credit rating, then they're going to take that person rather than somebody that might be very low income and has no credit rating. The families that we deal with would not have a chance of ever renting a home, let alone owning one [Key informant 18]

5.4 PLANNING ISSUES AND THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This section presents results relating to the second research question; “How are boarding houses being provided for under the existing planning and regulatory framework?” In order to address the research question, key informants were asked; “How well do you think that boarding houses in your area are being provided for under planning and regulatory provisions?” In answering this question, the key informants identified a wide range of planning issues and commented on the efficacy of both central and local government provisions.

5.4.1 Legislation and Central Government Policy

Perceptions of Current Legislation

It was evident from interviewing council staff in both case study areas that there was a perception that the legislation under which boarding houses are regulated is outdated and inadequate. Key Informant 14 an Auckland environmental health officer described the current health regulations as; “dated in terms of the penalties and some of the language is hard to interpret.” Key Informant 21 a Dunedin based environmental health officer

with overseas experience was less than satisfied with the regulatory and legislative framework in which he operates:

I spent over 30 years in this profession. 25 of them have been from elsewhere in my profession, and I've always from when I first started this job in the 1980s, I've had a considerable amount of housing legislation, disrepair powers and tools to deal with all manner of houses in multiple occupation, boarding houses, rented properties etc. I have absolutely no such tools here. The councils and governments attitude here is; "if you don't like it go and rent somewhere else." Those tools in the Health Act 1956 and Housing Improvement Regulations, they're Victorian. I think that there isn't a lead from the government. In the last few years I've been involved in trying to lobby for a housing warrant of fitness. It went before parliament. They binned it and the only spinoff of that is a tweak to the RTA (Residential tenancies Act 1986) to require landlords to put insulation in. The health Act 1956 requires it for a health officer to take action they need to be satisfied that the conditions are so serious, that they're insanitary and unacceptable to live in. It's very, very minimalist standards [Key Informant 21]

Income Assistance

Many boarding house tenants are dependent on some form of government financial assistance. Tenants on a benefit are eligible for additional support in the form of an accommodation supplement, set at a maximum of \$140 NZD in Auckland and \$65 NZD in Dunedin. Other services include redirection payments to ensure that a portion of the tenant's allowance is paid directly to the landlord. Additional support can be made available to help people on low incomes to access accommodation, however these contributions are normally required to be paid back. "You can go to WINZ they'll give you money but you have to pay it back" [Key Informant 22]. Key Informant 4, an employee of the Ministry of Social Development explained the services offered for accessing boarding house accommodation:

When they go into these boarding houses there is normally a commitment to pay a couple of weeks in advance and we normally meet that through a recoverable advancement, so that it gets paid back through the government, but we also put in place sometimes a redirection which means that the landlord gets paid directly from the persons income from the government and its paid on the night that the

benefits paid, so that removes the need for anyone to worry about whether they have to pay it or they're getting paid. And you normally find that this redirection includes power. So that takes away the need to worry about the power companies, they get their power included into the rent or into the board and it works out quite well. The money that's left over is for purchasing food and any other things they might need like to go to the doctor or something like that [Key Informant 4]

Tenant Rights

There was concern among the key informants in both case study areas that boarding house tenants lacked an awareness of their rights under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*. There appear to be challenges in providing information to tenants, and this is not helped by the lack of boarding house registration, conflicting boarding house definitions, and a general lack of knowledge about where boarding houses are. Key Informant 1, a tenancy mediator described the difficulties of providing boarding house tenants with adequate information:

I have tried to get a list of boarding houses before to drop off literature for the tenants so that they can pick up a pamphlet on boarding house law or whatever, and there doesn't seem to be a list of boarding houses, so I am guessing they are not very well monitored as they don't seem to know which ones are and which ones aren't.

Key Informant 6 was also concerned about a lack of understanding by boarding house tenants and landlords about their rights and obligations:

They'll come to an arrangement with the landlord and move out. Who knows if they are receiving their bond or not. They don't understand the difference between a boarding house tenancy and a normal tenancy and that's an area where we could empower them.

Key informant 1 believes that amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* through a 2010 amendment had resulted in fewer disputes coming to the attention of Tenancy Services:

*Ironically I used to mediate a lot more before the amendments where landlords actually preferred to be able to deal through the RTA (*Residential Tenancies Act 1986*), so they contacted us. There are some landlords that felt that was the best*

way of dealing with it, but these days it is very rare for me to have a boarding house dispute, not that they don't exist, but I don't see them.

Definitions of Boarding Houses

Key informants in both case study areas, eluded to confusion over the definition of boarding houses. *The Residential Tenancies Act 1986* defines premises intended for six or more people, with shared facilities as boarding houses yet, some premises that comply with this definition do not identify themselves as boarding houses. Many Dunedin premises advertise themselves as 'studio rooms' as described by Key Informant 1, a tenancy mediator:

There is some dispute over the definition of a boarding house. I don't think the legislation has been written very well. I'm sure that it was intended for more vulnerable and transient tenants. There are some arguments over the fact that some of the high quality student accommodation in Dunedin are in fact legally boarding houses due to the number of people who occupy them and the shared facilities.

Key Informant 22, a Dunedin landlord also described the impact that studio rooms were having on the Dunedin single room occupancy market:

Studio rooms are no different from this. You'll sign an individual tenancy they give free power and free Wi-Fi for \$235 a week, so the only people that will go there are workers, or people that haven't got the criteria to go along and get a tenancy. I can't charge that [they] are charging \$70 more per week.

Key informant 6, an Auckland social service worker identified a trend of private homes being operated on a basis of single room leases, similar to the suburban rooming house trend occurring in Melbourne:

The latest trend is private landlords actually converting their houses into that sort of thing. New ones are opening in Grey Lynn. The word is slowly filtering around, because you can get more return on your property if you are prepared to manage it a bit more actively in terms of renting out a single room to certain individuals. They are creating these constructive flatting situations where there is no head tenant, but how do you manage them?

5.4.2 The Role of Local Government

The key informants' perceptions on the role that councils play in the boarding house sector and the performance of the councils varied. The proliferation of premises that operate in breach of regulations and concerns about exploitative practises by some operators, has some key informants calling for the Auckland Council to have a more active role. In Dunedin there are fewer concerns about the adequacy of the role the council play, although it is acknowledged that they have very little involvement with boarding houses.

Some Auckland key informants, particularly social service workers, were concerned about the ineffectiveness of complaint-based, reactive compliance and enforcement processes. Boarding house tenants are not generally regarded as a group that will speak out when faced with problems with their living environment or landlords. There was also some confusion over who to contact within the council in relation to specific complaints. Table 17 below shows an assortment of key informant comments relating to concerns that they have about complaint-based processes for boarding house enforcement and inspection procedures.

Table 17: Comments on complaint-based processes
They don't snitch, it's not in their nature. They associate following the proper process as snitching and you'll never get it addressed unless you challenge it [Key Informant 6]
There are standards, but they are not enforced. When things are complaint-based our clientele are not going to complain [Key Informant 7]
People around here are pretty tolerant, partly because they're getting on themselves and they're partly tolerant because if you stick your nose in someone else's business you might get it smacked, so people get on and they don't complain [Key Informant 15]
Who do you ring and under what auspices to get regulated? Is it the building inspection? Is it fire? Is it the department of health? Is it tenancy services? And all of these regulators all depend on someone essentially blowing a whistle as opposed to a standardisation of a process where organisations are audited every year. They are struggling day to day to survive, and certainly don't have the skill set because you are talking about some pretty high powered reality, and what they are putting at threat is their own accommodation. Any accommodation is often better than no accommodation so people are not going to risk it [Key Informant 10]
I'm not saying the council isn't sympathetic to it. I think they're wanting to avoid problems, but clearly where there's a report of a problem they have to act [Key Informant 15]

It is acknowledged by many of the key informants that the closure of boarding house premises due to regulatory breaches can cause downstream problems for tenants. This scenario would be particularly concerning for boarding house tenants in Auckland where such a move would likely result in homelessness. Table 18 below presents comments from key informants in relation to the consequences of the closure of boarding house premises.

Table 18: Comments on the closure of boarding houses
I think that if the council started nit-picking away too much you'd find that people throw their hands up and think I've done my best and then move on [Key Informant 4]
If all the boarding houses were pulled today we would have some serious issues [Key Informant 10]
Some of these people do prefer to live elsewhere, but can't at those rates. At the end of the day it does make enforcement a bit difficult for us, how far do we go with the legislation? Sometimes it might result in people being out on the street at the end of the day [Key Informant 12]
It gets difficult because when there's a dangerous building situation there's obligations on the council to act, and other agencies are reliant on those boarding houses as well. Corrections are putting people into them, the police are dropping people off to them, the health agencies are placing people in these boarding houses [key informant 14]
I think the council turns a blind eye to it and I think they do that in part because they're between a rock and hard place, because if they close these places down, some of them are legit and meet the planning rules, some of the are less formal and simply there. The council unless they get a complaint won't act on it. To a degree there's turning a blind eye to these things partly because they don't make good headlines when they're throwing people out of houses [Key Informant 15]

5.4.3 Case Study Specific Issues and Comparisons

Proactive Enforcement in Auckland

There was an acknowledgement among Auckland key informants that recently adopted proactive enforcement methods were a step in the right direction, but also a belief that these measures should go a lot further. Table 19 below shows comments of key Informants regarding recent Auckland Council movement towards a system of proactive inspections.

Table 19: Comments on proactive inspections in Auckland
It's taken a long time to get some type of movement on the owners having to abide by the regulations of city council. It's happening at this time, but it's been very slow. The standards are pretty low anyway, the basics [...] We were saying my goodness you need to review them these aren't good enough [Key Informant 8]
We've met on a number of occasions over the last year and a half and the culmination of that is that the council initiated the inspection of 20 boarding houses in this area, which I think is a positive move [Key Informant 9]
I'm glad that council are on board and looking at the standards of these places now [Key Informant 16]

Auckland City Merger

Changes associated with the merger of Auckland City into a single unitary authority are attributed by some key informants as being problematic for effective planning and regulation of the boarding house accommodation sector:

Part of the tension that is happening in Auckland is that the regulatory framework is moving on the Super City line, so obviously in Auckland the different council areas all have different rules and actually those different rules are still in the process of being sorted out [...] part of the problem is that there are so many bodies involved and there is no one regulator, and it's the lack of a regulator that is creating real problems. At the moment looking at it from the outside, boarding houses can really do what they want and they aren't being held under any kind of inspection or regulation, partly in Auckland because it has moved from the five councils to one [Key Informant 10]

Having the Super-City, we have a lot of people from all over the world coming in. Our infrastructure can't support it, our roads can't, our hospitals can't and I guess that's having an influence on our homes, because there are people coming in from overseas that can afford to buy homes and they're pushing all the house prices up. So from a council point of view maybe they should start thinking about the folks that are already here and looking after the people in the city centre [Key Informant 18]

South Auckland Boarding House Project

A boarding house project was being completed at the time of writing in South Auckland as part of a bylaw review process. It comprises a pilot study targeting 20 boarding house premises, using a combined regulatory approach. This process has come about in part as the result of pressure from the community, social service workers and adverse media attention. In summing up the purpose of the project, Key Informant 13 stated; *“I guess it is getting the message across to boarding house owners in terms of our expectations around living conditions”*. It signifies a move away from compliant-based processes to a more proactive system of inspections and enforcement. One intention of the pilot is to devise a template for future enforcement, and another is to inform policy for new bylaw and plan provisions as the legacy plans become inoperative and more provisions of the Auckland Unitary plan come into operation. Table 20 below shows comments of Auckland City Council environmental health and planning staff involved in the boarding house project.

Table 20: Auckland Council comments on the Boarding House Project
Part of the aim of the project was to uplift the conditions of boarding houses and another was to assess the effectiveness of the existing legislation, look at the conditions there, and seeing if the conditions can be assessed with the existing legislation. So the legislation we looked at was the building act and building codes and the RMA (<i>Resource Management Act 1991</i>) and District Plan for the resource consents, the Health Act and the Housing Improvement Regulations for the environmental health officers. Using a combined regulatory response, most if not all of the conditions that we found out in any of the boarding houses could be addressed by a combination of the legislation [Key informant 13]
The whole intent of this project wasn't to shut people down, or shut the boarding houses down, or go at it from a really regulatory perspective. We spent months working with other government agencies, other social agencies, the likes of Monte Cecilia. We were going to move from a reactive approach to a proactive approach, so we needed to do a pilot to figure out what exactly was out there and what are the conditions out there. We targeted South Auckland because they had a list, other people contributed to the list and we chose 20 boarding houses. We tackled this in a very open transparent manner and we put together some contingency plans. If we are to close a premises down in an unlikely event of some significant health and safety issues and the like. We advise the owners of the boarding houses we were going to do the inspections as well and they had time to do whatever they needed to do under the Tenancy Act. We gave the tenants notice to enter the bedrooms as well. We went out and did the joint inspections with building control, resource consents, our office and fire safety and it was good to work with the owners as well. It was a combined regulatory approach in terms of looking at boarding houses. We are still working through the process to get them all to comply [Key Informant 12]
What we are looking at from a regulatory approach, is around the living conditions in terms of the whole area around social impacts and social conditions. From a regulatory perspective,

we don't have the expertise or the ability to look at and address that, but we work closely with social agencies and NGOs as well to try to work together to look at these things holistically, but it's a challenge. It's a really significant issue to try and pick and progress the different issues. We've had a first go at the pilot from a regulatory perspective, we believe it's worked quite successfully. There are multiple breaches of the legislation, and we are working with the owners, and most of them have been pretty cooperative in terms of dealing with the issues, so in terms of going forward, we're looking at delivering some kind of compliance plan. The idea is that we are not going to inspect every boarding house every year, but we are going to have some targeted intervention and based on some kind of risk that we haven't worked out yet. If we have 160 boarding houses or whatever in Auckland, we will pick up a number based on some kind of risk profile and using the combined regulatory approach we will target those in the way that we did with the pilot project. It's a fine line. It's not like there are many options. Before we got into the pilot we spent a good few weeks working out contingency plans. If we had to close a boarding house down what do we do with the tenants? How do we support them? How do we work with other government agencies and social agencies to make sure they have somewhere? It's not like there is lots of capacity [Key Informant 13]

5.4.4 Perceptions of the Dunedin City Council

The findings of this research showed that the key informants from Dunedin were less likely to emphasise the role of that the Council plays in regulating boarding houses than the Auckland key informants were. Complaints to the Dunedin City Council relating to boarding houses are relatively rare and the issues that can be attributed to housing market pressures do not exist in Dunedin to the same extent that they do in Auckland.

On the role the Dunedin City Council plays in compliance, Key Informant 5, a landlord stated; *"There are fire checks going on at one of my places which has to be done which is fine. You get the odd noise complaint and things."* When asked about the level of communication they received from the council the same key informant stated; *"Not as good as it could be. Quite often you hear about these things it's quite far down the line and when something needs to be done they should sit and talk to the person."* Key Informant 22, another Dunedin based landlord also eluded to a low profile approach from the Dunedin City Council:

We have to go through a warrant of fitness every year and they follow that up, but I think that it's just a requirement. A lot of landlords, they buy something and they never do anything. I've never had anyone from the council ring up and ask to come and see the place.

Key informant 21, a Dunedin-based environmental health officer, revealed that boarding houses were seldom reported to Dunedin City Council staff for matters relating to building standards:

Eight years of being here I can only recall one specific complaint. It was by an individual room occupant of an infestation of vermin in that person's room. I attended it just the same as I would of if it was a complaint of vermin at any other property; that being one of the nuisances that we have power over under the Health Act 1956. I attended with the operator of the boarding house. Only when I got there did I find that it was a boarding house with multiple let rooms and communal shared facilities.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR REGULATORY IMPROVEMENTS

This section outlines suggestions that the key informants made for improvements to the ways in which boarding houses are being provided for through regulation. It focuses on the third research question; “What regulatory changes could be made to improve the ways in which boarding houses are provided for? To address this question the key informants were asked, the same question. The suggestions of the key informants inform the recommendations in Chapter Six.

Better adherence to building standards and more comprehensive compliance and enforcement processes were among the most common suggestions for improvements. Key Informant 1 suggested that there could be improved building standards, but had reservations that the costs of any such measures could be passed on to the tenants:

I think it's important that the standard of the buildings are of a decent quality and that they are not overcrowded, although I understand that landlords don't want too much interference. I think that when you're housing that many people that they need to comply with the minimum standards and that includes safety, just decent living standards, and enough bathrooms for the people, that kind of stuff. As long as there was no ongoing cost, I think it would be worthwhile to look after those people, to set something up.

Key Informant 6 recommended improved standards and checks on premises which include obtaining information about who the premises are being operated by:

They need to be having a standard for people especially when they are getting tax payer money. A standard code, doing checks on boarding houses and doing your checks on who's running them.

It was suggested by Key Informant 7 that a harder line needed to be taken on building standards, including the forced closure of some premises; *"They should shut down the ones that are not up to standard with the building code."* Key informant 16 was in support of a warrant of fitness system for buildings:

Having a warrant of fitness, that keeps the landlord accountable you can't have families in a home where you can't even open a window and the pipes aren't working properly. It's unfair."

Key informant 17 also favoured a warrant of fitness system and a regime of regular inspections:

They talk about the warrant of fitness and I think that's a good way of it [...] it's about how regularly do they actually go in and review them and say, "look are you up to standard? Are you keeping this place clean and safe? Especially if you are catering for families." Is it a 6 monthly or a yearly thing? They need to beef that up a bit. Send someone out on 3 monthly basis. That's the only way we are going to be able to say yes you are up to standard [Key Informant 17]

Some Auckland social Service workers were less convinced that further regulation would be effective at addressing issues of poor building and living standards:

I'm somewhat cynical about that approach, I think there do need to be clear regulations around what the standards are and the owners need to be made to adhere to them. I understand that they are there, but the inspectors don't feel they have the authority to carry out sanctions [Key Informant 9]

5.5.1 Licencing and Registration

Key Informant 10 spoke of the need for stronger regulation at regional levels; *"ideally I'd love it to have the teeth of national legislation that is embodied or enacted per region so that the council would have the responsibility"*; and was also in favour of a system of boarding house licencing;

I would set up stuff around health, fire, status of checking how people operate against each other, how they are checking their clients the use of money the charging of money, how much are they charging all that kind of stuff needs to be taken into account.[Key Informant 10]

A number of key informants believed that a lack of a formal system of boarding house registration imposed problems. There are obvious difficulties in providing social services for tenants and regulating boarding houses if there is a lack of knowledge of where they are. Key Informant 12, an environmental health officer believed that by applying the provisions of the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947*, it is possible to create a register of premises, albeit on a voluntary basis. The same key informant was cautious however, about introducing procedures that impose additional costs on operators. Table 21 below contains an assortment of comments of key informants relating to registration, or the lack of registration processes for boarding houses.

Table 21: Comments on the registration of boarding houses
The Housing Improvement Regulations gives the TA's (territorial authorities) the ability to create a register at the moment, but it's probably more on a voluntary basis at the moment. If a formal process is put in place, we could look at that. I think everyone's looking at it from a perspective of not adding extra expense around registration and licencing. Without getting the benefits from that you are just loading on additional cost that will be passed on to the tenants. So it's about improving the conditions and at the same time managing them in a way that you don't really increase compliance costs. [Key Informant 12]
There's no national register. Auckland Council don't have a region wide register. One of the issues that is out there relating to boarding houses is there is no consistent definition. So there are inconsistencies between different processes of legislation and our legacy district plans as well, which we can manage in terms of applying the relevant bits of legislation, but when you go to [...] define and create a register it makes it difficult. So were working with our other social partners to put together a list, but there is no formal register, that's for sure [Key Informant 14]
A lot of the boarding houses are not registered so the council can't keep up with those. Half of those that we gave the names for they are nor even on the list. How can they go in and inspect them if they don't even know they are operating? [Key informant 8]

5.5.2 Updating Existing Legislation

Some key informants, particularly those that worked in regulatory roles, were of the belief that dated national legislation imposed restrictions and a degree of uncertainty in the process of regulating boarding houses. Key Informant 12 suggested; *“The Housing Improvement Regulations 1947 really needs to be updated and made more reflective of*

this day and age and increase the penalties and make it more modern” and Key Informant 14; “*we would support changes to the Health Regulations, because they are dated in terms of the penalties and some of the language is hard to interpret.*” Key Informant 21 favours more legislative and regulatory measures to make building owners accountable for the safety of their buildings and was encouraged by some of the proposed provisions of the Dunedin Second Generation Plan, particularly proposals to tighten regulations on housing types with high numbers of occupants:

It’s a common sense requirement to make owners of multiple occupancy property, call them boarding houses whatever you want, to have to provide these safety net confidences, but there doesn’t seem to be and that does worry me, and you know there’s one waiting for a multiple fatality accident, multiple lives lost in a fire. I’m encouraged by the discussion at the moment in regard to moving from the current plan to the Second Generation Plan. I believe there may be some thought on lowering the number, I think it’s about 20 at the moment. I’m encouraged because we’ve got lots of houses rented with 4, 5, 6, 8 students and it can be problematic, but not always, but definitely those with 15 or 17 or 19 can be problematic. I’m encouraged by that, because it would encourage the right design and structure and layout to accommodate that kind of occupancy.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR NON-REGULATORY IMPROVEMENTS

Not all the key informants favoured regulatory solutions. This section addresses the fourth research question; “What non-regulatory options could be considered to improve the way that boarding houses are being provided for?” The same question was put to the key informants in interviews.

Within the context of Auckland’s housing market issues, increasing supply was seen as an important priority for improving the housing options at the lower end of the rental market, and reducing the level of deprivation of some boarding house tenants. Some favoured social policy initiatives over rules, and advocated for a greater role for social services in identifying problems and issues in boarding houses, and educating tenants and landlords. Key Informant 5 was mindful of problems that can arise from tenants being idle during the day, and suggested that the quality of life of boarding house tenants could be improved through organised recreational activities, training, or employment

initiatives. Table 22 below shows an assortment of key informant comments in relation to non-regulatory solutions.

Table 22: Key informant comments on non-regulatory solutions
I think we've taken a social work role and also a community role in working to identify it as an issue in the community. More broadly, the context is that there isn't enough affordable housing. I think the wider thing is affordable social housing needs to be available so that people don't have to end up in in boarding houses and caravan parks [Key Informant 9]
I think it's all very well having rules and that sort of stuff, but I think part of the problem is it's not a land use problem, it's to do with a greater social issue. To a degree, people are not aware of what the planning rules are by and large. From a land use point of view, while there may be some effects that in a middle class neighbourhood would be a problem, perhaps round here they're not. The bigger issues are the social ones to do with the risks that people are and quality of life that people have or don't have, and those really aren't planning things, they are broader social policy issues. I would have thought that the bigger issue was about supply. It's about having alternative ways of housing people other than what they've got. Clearly there's not enough money in the game to do that right now, so that's a big problem [Key Informant 15]
There are a lot of non-government organisations working with the tenants to ensure compliance and make conditions better for the tenants. It's probably an educative approach compared to a regulatory approach [Key Informant 12]

5.7 CONCLUSION

For the most part, the key informants described a broad range of factors that characterise boarding house tenants in both the Auckland and Dunedin case study areas. As an accommodation form at the lower end of the rental market, boarding houses provide accommodation for many of the low-income and marginalised populations of these communities, but by no means cater exclusively to these groups. Boarding houses can provide single room occupancy accommodation for people of a range of income levels and other groups such as students. Rather than identifying specific factors to characterise boarding house tenants, the key informants identified a range of factors that can interrelate, for example, mental illness, a tendency towards crime, and addiction. The research from this study suggests that boarding house tenants are often people with limited accommodation choices, and vulnerabilities that can be compounded by the boarding house living environment.

There were some significant contrasts between the factors attributed to boarding house tenants from Auckland and their Dunedin counterparts. A prominent concern identified by Auckland key informants, was the implications of rapidly increasing property prices

and a scarcity of housing supply at the lower end of the rental market. The people accessing boarding house accommodation tend to do so for economic reasons and have few if any other accommodation choices. Key informants from Auckland suggested that it is becoming increasingly difficult for some lower income people to access boarding house accommodation, with increasing numbers faced with complete homelessness. Auckland key informants expressed concern at the number of families domiciled in boarding house premises, another factor attributed to the housing market conditions. By comparison, Dunedin has a relatively stable housing market and key informants were less likely to characterise boarding house tenants in the context of housing market pressures. Instead, Dunedin key informants focused more on the vulnerabilities of the tenants; tenants with mental illness, tenants with addictions and released prisoners. While still existing at the lower end of the property market, the opinions of Dunedin boarding house tenants elicited from the research suggested that they were exercising elements of choice in accessing boarding house accommodation.

The key informants' perceptions of boarding houses suggested that standards vary considerably, particularly in Auckland. Key informants from Auckland characterised some boarding houses as being structurally not fit for purpose, poorly maintained, overcrowded, unsanitary, insecure and unsafe. Conditions were considered detrimental to the treatment of people with mental illness and addictions, a poor environment for rehabilitating released prisoners and particularly unsuitable for families. Dunedin key informants, including tenants expressed a general level of satisfaction with the condition of boarding houses in their community. The stable property market conditions provide an incentive for landlords to maintain or uplift the standards of their buildings and facilities in order to attain a profitable level of occupancy. Dunedin landlords are held in a high regard by their tenants, and by social service workers. Auckland key informants by comparison had mixed views on landlords, with some considered better than others. The research indicated exploitative practises by some Auckland landlords, which included allegations of tenants being placed in unsafe, unsanitary, overcrowded living conditions and landlords putting a profit motive ahead of the needs of their tenants.

Perceptions of the regulatory framework were mixed. In Auckland, the key informants concerns with boarding house living conditions had many calling for the Auckland Council to play a wider role in compliance inspections and enforcement. By comparison in Dunedin, few key informants were critical of the council, or saw the council as having

a major role to play in the regulation of boarding houses. Some key informants were not satisfied with the complaint-based nature of regulation and recent moves in Auckland to adopt proactive inspections were considered a step in the right direction. There were also concerns expressed about the inadequacy of central government legislation to address the needs of the boarding house sector. Some statutes are considered outdated and confusing, and there is considered to be general lack of knowledge over matters such as tenant rights.

The key informants proposed a range of regulatory and non-regulatory solutions to the issues that face the boarding house sector. Common regulatory solutions included improved standards, more rigorous compliance measures and systems of premises licencing and registration. Some key informants favoured non-regulatory solutions, such as a greater role for social service organisations, better education of boarding house operators and better methods for addressing Auckland's housing supply. The solutions put forward by the key informants are intended to inform the recommendations outlined in Chapter Six.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to interpret the findings from the primary research in a manner that is aligned with the research objectives, and to analyse those findings in the context of the theoretical framework. The first research objective, relating to the characteristics of boarding house tenants and boarding house premises, is addressed through the primary data sourced from key informant interviews and by drawing comparisons with the theoretical framework. In addressing the second research question, the key informants' knowledge and perceptions of the regulatory framework of boarding houses are interpreted and compared with overseas and local examples that were outlined in the literature review and context chapters. The third objective is addressed through interpreting the suggestions that the key informants made for regulatory improvement, and the fourth is addressed by interpreting their suggestions for non-regulatory solutions. The purpose of interpreting the key informants' suggestions for improvements is to inform the recommendations contained in later in this chapter.

6.2 BOARDING HOUSE TENANT CHARACTERISTICS

Key informants for this research described a broad range of factors that characterise boarding house tenants. Recurrent findings in academic literature on boarding houses suggest that boarding house tenants can have vulnerabilities that are multifaceted and interrelated. Among the major themes to emerge in the literature on boarding houses, were tenants with mental illness, homelessness, addiction, poor physical health, ex-prisoners in boarding houses and the interrelatedness of these factors (Aspinall, 2013; Deane *et al.*, 2012; Foley, 2009). The findings of this research are consistent with the international literature. It is generally acknowledged by participants in this research that boarding house tenants can have problems and issues that are complexly interwoven.

There was a marked contrast between the way in which the key informants from Dunedin and Auckland characterised boarding house tenants. Dunedin participants across all key informant types, focused predominantly on vulnerability factors, describing tenants as commonly having mental health issues, addictions, and being recently released from prison. Key informants from Auckland tended to describe a broader range of tenant types,

including families with young children, students and the working poor. Notably, accessing boarding house accommodation in Auckland appears to be heavily influenced by the housing market conditions. Boarding houses in Auckland not only accommodate those living on benefits. Many working poor have limited accommodation choices and reside in boarding houses due to a lack of alternatives. A lack of housing supply can compromise the housing choices of people at all levels of the market, but it is those at the lower end of the market that are affected the most. The restrictive Auckland property market is particularly hard on those with a poor credit history, a lack of character references, a history of addiction, recently released prisoners and generally anyone that doesn't present as reliable and trustworthy. While in some contexts boarding houses are considered an undesirable form of accommodation, the research completed in Auckland suggests that boarding houses can be the only alternative to complete homelessness for some people. Dunedin key informants made few references to homelessness and transience, and this is perhaps indicative of a housing market with better affordability and choice.

6.2.1 Families in Boarding Houses

Perhaps the most telling ramification of Auckland's property market conditions is the reported prevalence of families domiciled in boarding houses. Families in boarding houses did not feature among the issues identified by Dunedin key informants, but Auckland key informants made frequent references to the living situations of families with children in boarding houses. Some Auckland social service workers expressed concerns about families facing discrimination in the rental market, and hence moving into single room occupancy boarding houses due to a lack of alternatives. Social service workers reported having to reluctantly facilitate placements of families in boarding houses as a short-term emergency measure. There was considerable concern among the social workers about the impacts of families living in boarding houses for long periods of time. Overcrowded rooms, inadequate cooking facilities, poor bathroom facilities and exposure to inappropriate behaviour by adult tenants are viewed as having particularly negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of children. There were examples presented in the research by key informants of exploitation of vulnerable families by landlords, such as placing them in crowded, unsafe and unsanitary conditions. The use of shared spaces and limited private space is also seen as unhelpful to family relations. Families

and children do not feature prominently in literature on boarding houses, but they are referred to in a broader context in some studies on homelessness (Flatau *et al.*, 2013; Spinney, Hulse & Kolar, 2010). Of the literature explored in the present study, there were few references to families living in boarding houses, and no studies on the plight of children in boarding houses in New Zealand were evident.

6.2.2 Women in Boarding Houses

Despite concerns about families living in boarding houses in Auckland, few key informants made specific references to the plight of women living in boarding houses. It was acknowledged by key informants in both Auckland and Dunedin that the majority of boarding houses tenants in their localities were male. Some studies suggest that a male dominated boarding house living environment can be poorly suited to women (Attard & Price-Kelly, 2010; Baxter, 1996; Mifflin & Wilton, 2005). Conversely, international research suggests that boarding house premises that are restricted to females are more beneficial to the safety and wellbeing of women (Grace, Malone & Murphy, 2015). Auckland and Dunedin both have a limited number of boarding houses reserved for women, but the majority cater for mixed genders.

6.2.3 Mental Health Issues

Tenants with mental illness and the implications of decentralisation, are dominant areas of international literature on boarding houses. In many parts of the world they have become a common housing alternative for people with mental illness (Browne & Courtney, 2005; Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998; Horan *et al.*, 2001; Schiff, Schiff & Schneider, 2010). It was widely acknowledged by the key informants that the boarding house environment can be poorly suited to people with mental illness. Mental health issues were identified by many of the key informants often in the context of a range of vulnerabilities that some tenants faced. Key informants from Dunedin were more likely than their Auckland counterparts to describe mental illness in itself as a common tenant characteristic. A possible explanation for this is the clustering of a high proportion of Dunedin's boarding houses in the City Rise area, where there is also a high concentration of mental health services (Gleeson, Hay & Law, 1998).

6.2.4 Homelessness and Transience

The transient nature of boarding house tenants was generally acknowledged by the key informants. Many of the key informants worked in social service roles and had involvement in assisting homeless and marginally housed clients with limited accommodation choices into housing. Boarding house accommodation is seldom seen as being the most suitable long term accommodation option. Most social service workers interviewed for the current study were reluctant to assist their clients into boarding houses, and would seek alternatives when they are available. Nevertheless, there often are no other options, especially in Auckland. The use of boarding houses as a last resort accommodation for the homeless featured in the literature review, with some researchers also questioning the suitability of boarding houses as emergency accommodation (Gallagher & Gove, 2007). Key informants from non-governmental social service agencies, such as the Salvation Army and the Auckland City Mission, mentioned difficulties that they had in placing homeless clients in boarding houses due to the stigma that their clients carried with them. PARS staff in both Auckland and to a lesser extent Dunedin, claimed to have significant difficulties in obtaining housing access for ex-prisoners, due to their reputations. Among the key informants, there is general acknowledgement of the benefits that can arise from living in stable housing. Conversely there was mention of the flow-on effects of becoming homeless and moving into transient housing, such as loss of dignity, loss of possessions and break downs in family relationships are mentioned by key informants. Many of the key informants' observations on homelessness are supported in the literature explored for the present study. There was a general awareness that homelessness extends beyond those that are without shelter, a notion that is supported by the literature consulted for this study (Chamberlain, 2012a; Jansen, 2015). Literature on boarding houses recognises the potential benefits of placing marginally housed people in stable housing forms which can include, better prospects for the treatment of mental health problems and addiction, and better rehabilitation of released prisoners (Collins, 2010; Polcin & Henderson, 2008).

6.2.5 Addiction

Addiction was referred to by the key informants as a relatively common characteristic of boarding house tenants. The relationship between substance addiction and the unstable nature of the boarding house lifestyle was described by some key informants, a

relationship that is also demonstrated in international literature (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008; Palepu *et al.*, 2013). Key informants in both case study areas, suggested that the presence of people with addictions in boarding houses could impact adversely on the wellbeing of other vulnerable tenants, a relationship that also features in the literature consulted for this study (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008). Some Auckland social service workers were particularly concerned for children living in a boarding house environment being exposed to the behaviours of adult tenants with addiction.

6.2.6 Physical Health

Physical health impacts identified in the research include illnesses that occur as a result of poor living conditions, such as asthma and skin rashes. Some key informants had observed infestations of cockroaches, bedbugs and vermin, and a number of premises were described as having damp and mouldy conditions that were detrimental to the health of tenants. Other negative health impacts include poor diet as a result of inadequate cooking facilities, and poor hygiene due to poor sanitation and inadequate bathroom facilities. Overall, Auckland key informants identified more physical health concerns than those in Dunedin. The Dunedin boarding house tenant survey suggested that tenants were satisfied with the standard of cleanliness of their premises. All tenants interviewed as part of the research, reported that violence had occurred in their Dunedin boarding houses. The tenants that had previously lived in Auckland and some social workers claimed that violence was prevalent in some Auckland boarding houses. The negative health impacts of boarding house living are acknowledged in much of the literature on boarding houses, including studies that identify significantly higher rates of mortality among boarding house residents than general populations (Hwang *et al.*, 2003; Hwang *et al.*, 2009).

6.2.7 Released Prisoners

Released prisoners and tenants with a propensity toward criminal offending, were generally identified in the research as a group that commonly accesses boarding house accommodation. There were several explanations given by key informants for the high number of ex-prisoners domiciled in boarding houses. Most commonly they included, poor financial circumstances, a lack of family connections and support, and negative reputations.

Prisoners are generally in a poor financial situation upon their release. They receive a one off payment known as ‘steps to freedom’ of \$350 NZD, and face a stand-down period before they can obtain income support payments. Under these circumstances, released prisoners are unlikely to be able to afford a bond or advance on rent for a private house. Additionally, many prisoners will have debt, poor credit ratings and ongoing commitments for paying fines and reparations. Many ex-prisoners do not have strong family connections, or have become estranged from family members and friends, and do not have the option of sharing a household with others. The cost of single occupancy accommodation other than boarding houses will often exceed the budget of released prisoners.

The reputation of released prisoners can hinder access to accommodation, especially when landlords and property managers require references or criminal history checks. Some organisations such as community housing providers will refuse to offer accommodation to former prisoners. PARS workers with the responsibility for assisting released prisoners into housing, have difficulty finding private rental accommodation for their clients. For many released prisoners a boarding room is the only option. PARS workers from Dunedin claimed that they had a good working relationship with boarding house landlords, while their counterparts in Auckland had an at times difficult relationship with landlords, and had a great deal of difficulty in accessing boarding house accommodation for their clients.

For the most part, the key informants did not have a favourable view of ex-prisoners and criminals living in a boarding house environment, particularly those with other vulnerabilities such as mental illness and addictions. It is acknowledged that living in a boarding house can contribute to higher rates of recidivism, especially if they are returning to an environment where they have previously offended. Some of the key informants believed that government policy had made matters worse, for example the increased monitoring requirements for released prisoners often limited their housing choices. Literature on ex-prisoners in boarding houses supports the concerns of the key informants. The standard of housing is an important factor in the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-prisoners into the community (Baldry, 2002), and research suggests that by living in boarding houses released prisoners are more likely reoffend (Baldry *et al.*, 2006).

6.2.8 Poverty and Financial Support for Tenants

Boarding house tenants in both case study areas, are characterised by key informants as living in difficult financial circumstances. Boarding houses occupy the cheapest sector of the housing market in both case study areas, however due to a disparity in accommodation costs, those living at the margins tend to be financially worse off in Auckland than Dunedin. Government income support levels in the both centres are balanced through tenants' entitlement to an 'accommodation supplement'. In Dunedin the accommodation supplement level is set at a maximum of \$65 NZD, while in Auckland eligible tenants are entitled to a maximum of \$145 NZD. However, at the time the research was completed disparities in the level of boarding house rents were significantly greater than the differences between levels of income support. For example, a Dunedin boarding house tenant specified that after paying their board they had \$160 NZD per week to spend, while an Auckland key informant suggested that some tenants had only \$60 NZD per week or less to live on after paying their board. Tenants can receive additional financial support through advances from Work and Income New Zealand to cover bonds and advanced rental payments, however these payments are usually required to be reimbursed.

6.2.9 Landlords and Managers

Key informants had mixed perceptions of landlords and boarding house managers. Dunedin landlords were regarded as being trustworthy, having a social responsibility and delivering a level of service that went beyond merely providing accommodation. Research on boarding house landlords and managers suggests that it is common for landlords to be required to provide informal social service functions (Deane *et al.*, 2012). The positive perceptions of Dunedin landlords were reinforced by the results of the boarding house tenant survey. Although the sample was small, the tenants demonstrated a level of trust in their landlords. All survey participants claimed that they felt comfortable bringing problems to the attention of their landlords. Some Auckland key informants by comparison, had negative perceptions of landlords and eluded to exploitative practises such as maintaining unsafe and unsanitary conditions, overcrowding, breaching tenant rights under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*, failure to maintain basic facilities and discrimination in tenant selection.

6.3 THE BOARDING HOUSE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

This section discusses the findings of the research relating to the living environment of boarding houses. As part of this research, respondents were asked to identify characteristics of the premises used as boarding houses. This includes the condition of the buildings, the facilities provided, safety, sanitation and issues such as overcrowding.

6.3.1 Building Conditions and Standards

The standard of the boarding houses described by the key informants was variable. For the most part, Dunedin premises were described positively with few serious concerns about the condition of buildings. By comparison the premises in Auckland received mixed responses, however most premises were described as being of a poor standard. Some Auckland key informants commented on structural inadequacies in buildings, including alterations that did not comply with building standards and planning requirements. Few premises are purpose-built for use as boarding houses and some were described by key informants as converted commercial buildings and large older houses. Social service workers in Auckland were concerned about the condition of a complex of former hospital buildings in Mangere, South Auckland that had been converted into several boarding houses. The same complex is described by Amore (2009) as being poorly maintained, unsafe and overcrowded. Many premises are converted to accommodation without proper structural modifications and without adequate insulation and ventilation. Maintenance standards in some premises were described as very poor. Key informants had observed evidence of very unsanitary conditions within bedrooms and shared spaces including dampness, mould, and infestations of bed bugs, cockroaches and vermin. Premises commonly had damage inflicted by tenants such as broken wall linings and damaged doors. Premises commonly have windows that don't open, or bedrooms have doors that don't lock, placing tenants and their possessions at risk.

Housing market conditions in Auckland have led to increased intensification of boarding house premises, contributing to overcrowding and increased fire risk. Out buildings are often used for additional accommodation, including caravans sheds, garages, and portable buildings. The desire of landlords to house more tenants leads to unsafe practises such as the use of extension cords for caravans, rather than certified wiring. In a study on Australian boarding houses, Foley (2009) links illegal modifications to unscrupulous landlords driven by a profit motive. A number of key informants described anecdotal and

first hand evidence of overcrowding, particularly in premises that provide rooms for families. Key informants in Auckland also had concerns about facilities in some premises. Some kitchens were described as, poorly maintained and unsanitary and inadequate. The lack of proper kitchen facilities can limit food choices, and can encourage the dangerous practise of cooking in bedrooms. The conditions of bathrooms were also painted in a bad light, with toilet and showering facilities inadequate in many premises.

The research raised concerns about safety in Auckland boarding houses, with many not adhering to basic fire safety requirements. Fire safety concerns identified included, exit doors that were locked, inadequate smoke doors, deficient sprinklers and emergency lighting, and unsafe wiring. Tenants cooking in rooms is common in some premises, and there are also risks associated with tenants smoking in rooms. Bans on cooking in bedrooms are included in the boarding house rules of many premises, however according to some key informants they are not routinely enforced by managers. The specific fire risks of boarding houses feature in international literature. Mass casualty boarding house fires have occurred in Australia and North America, and have been major drivers of boarding house regulation (Foley, 2009; Freeman, 2013).

6.3.2 Market Rental Influences on Boarding House Conditions

There is evidence that the conditions of boarding house premises in Auckland had worsened, a trend that was attributed by the key informants to the conditions of the Auckland housing market. High accommodation demand, and buoyant property market conditions are acknowledged in literature on boarding houses as leading to low-income tenants being housed in substandard conditions due to the exploitative practises of landlords (Foley, 2009). Dunedin premises were seldom the subject of complaints to the council or other organisations, and their condition was generally viewed in a positive light by the social service workers and tenants interviewed. Perhaps this is due to Dunedin being subject to fewer housing price pressures and tenants having more accommodation choices. The Dunedin landlords interviewed for this research were mindful of the need to maintain reasonable standards in their premises, or run the risk of losing tenants and not achieving an occupancy level that is viable.

6.3.3 Types of Premises

The types of boarding house premises identified by the key informants vary considerably, particularly in Auckland. There is a trend evident in Auckland of suburban houses being let on a single room occupancy basis in a manner that is consistent with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* definition of boarding houses. This trend is characteristic of research completed in Melbourne, Australia on the proliferation of suburban rooming house premises (Chamberlain, 2012a; Foley, 2009). Dunedin key informants identified studio rooms as a common accommodation option. Many studio room complexes are also being operated in a manner that is consistent with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* definition of boarding houses, although studio room operators tend to charge a higher rental.

6.3.4 Closure of Premises

Amid concerns over the conditions of boarding houses, it is widely acknowledged that closing premises could cause widespread problems for tenants, and in many cases would lead to them being completely homeless. This concern is recognised by social service workers and council workers alike. Auckland Council staff with the responsibility of inspecting boarding house premises have a plan in place to deal with any circumstances where it is deemed necessary to close a boarding house. Concerns about the downstream effects of the closure of premises has encouraged a cautious approach to enforcement. Auckland Council staff have chosen to allow boarding house operators time to bring their premises up to a required standard rather than forcing their closure. The issues relating to closure of premises, particularly the resulting displacement of tenants, also features in literature on boarding houses (Freeman, 2013).

6.3.5 Perceptions of Councils and Regulatory Authorities

A number of key informants had an unfavourable view of the complaint-based systems of enforcement, monitoring and compliance adopted by councils in Dunedin and Auckland. There were concerns that under a complaint-based system boarding house tenants due to their vulnerabilities were unlikely to make complaints. One explanation put forward by key informants that is supported in studies on boarding houses (Foley, 2009), is that some tenants living in unstable tenure would choose not to complain out of fear losing their tenancy. There is also a reluctance to complain among particular groups, such as that released prisoners which was linked by key informants to a mistrust of

authority and a culture of ‘not snitching’. Some Auckland social service workers were appreciative of recent moves towards a more proactive system of compliance and enforcement, however there was a belief that these measures should go further. A number of key informants believed that councils could do a lot more in terms of inspections, could set higher standards and could allocate more resources into compliance. There was concern that the Auckland Council was ‘turning a blind eye’ to regulatory breaches out of fears that this could force premises to close. Similar findings are evident in boarding house research where authorities have had to balance problems of tenants living in low standard accommodation with the prospect of them facing complete homelessness if premises are closed (Chamberlain, 2012a; Lockyer, 2012).

Among Auckland key informants, there is concern that the movement towards a ‘Super City’ has led to neglect, a lack of oversight and confusion over rules and responsibilities. The Auckland Unitary Plan is not fully operative and is being rolled out incrementally. At present decision making is undertaken in accordance with the district plans of former council entities known as, ‘legacy plans’. Each plan has separate operative provisions that affect spatial planning considerations and regulation of boarding houses. The manner in which Auckland’s merger has affected the boarding house sector has parallels with the merging of municipalities in Toronto, Canada as described by Freeman (2009). Even within the existing legacy plans there can be some confusion over which council departments have responsibilities for enforcement and regulation. Fragmented interdepartmental responsibilities, powers and compliance processes are recognised in research on boarding houses as being detrimental to the efficacy of regulation (Foley, 2009; Freeman, 2013; Westmore, 2013).

A lack of knowledge about the number and distribution of boarding houses, particularly a lack of a formal registration process was highlighted by some of the key informants. Regulatory authority staff such as environmental health officers, acknowledged that they were unaware of the number and locations of boarding houses in the communities they work in. Legislation exists that can empower territorial authorities to create registers under the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947*, however these powers do not extend to making registration a mandatory requirement. Neither the Dunedin City Council nor Auckland Council maintain boarding house registers, although a system of voluntary registration is being considered in Auckland. Mandatory registration and licencing of boarding houses and similar premises are common in many parts of the world, including

Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom (Drake, 2014; Freeman, 2013; Government of United Kingdom, 2015).

6.3.6 Perceptions of the Legislative Framework

Boarding houses are regulated under a wide range of legislative provisions which include the *Building Act 2004*, *Health Act 1956*, *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947* and the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*. Participants in the current research had a number of concerns and negative perceptions relating to the current legislation. The outdated provisions of the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947* and *Health Act 1956* allow for premises to be maintained at standards that are below modern expectations, and limit powers of enforcement unless standards are dire. Council employees consulted for this research were unsatisfied with the provisions of these statutes, describing them as impeding proper compliance and enforcement action. Penalty provisions within some legislation are also inadequate, for example the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947*, Section 21(9) imposes a \$4 NZD fine for failing to supply information or particulars for a register. As the regulations stand at present, it would be impractical to have anything other than a voluntary system of boarding house registration. Mandated registration processes are only likely to be put in place if there is a strengthening of central government legislation. The possibility of imposing a system of boarding house licencing was also discussed by some key informants. Licencing of boarding houses and similar premises is mandated in some countries, for example The United Kingdom uses a licencing system to regulate 'houses of multiple occupation' (Government of United Kingdom, 2015), and the New South Wales government requires some premises catering to disabled tenants to be licenced (Drake, 2013).

6.3.7 Tenancy Rights

There was a general perception among the key informants that the boarding house provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* were weak and confusing, and that many tenants and landlords were not fully aware of their rights and obligations under the Act. The definition of boarding house is rather broad and can unintentionally capture other accommodation forms, such as the 'studio room' complexes that are proliferating in the student area of Dunedin. Some tenants and landlords are unaware that their properties are technically being operated as boarding houses under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*. Complex and conflicting definitions of boarding houses is a concern

that has been identified in New Zealand literature (Amore, 2012). Breaches of tenant rights such as, arbitrary eviction and seeking undue rents do not often come to the attention of Tenancy Services, the sole organisation with the responsibility for addressing breaches of tenancy rights. It is acknowledged by some key informants that more could be done to make both landlords and tenants aware of their rights under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*.

6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

As part of the current research, key informants were asked to contribute suggestions for improving ways that boarding houses can be operated and provided for. The purpose of this aspect of the research was to inform the recommendations presented later in this chapter. The research sought to explore regulatory solutions, such as changes to planning provisions and standards, as well as non-regulatory solutions, such as measures that lead to improved practices and communication by stakeholders.

6.4.1 Suggestions for Regulatory Improvements

Key informants had a general preference for better adherence to minimum building standards in boarding houses, including safety standards and the standards of facilities such as bathrooms. It was suggested that boarding house premises should be inspected by councils and regulatory authorities on a regular basis to ensure that they are compliant. This was tempered by a level of scepticism that a system of regular inspections could be ineffective due to the weak legislative provisions under which sanctions are imposed. There was limited support for the forced closure of premises that were not up to standard, although not all key informants favoured such harsh enforcement action. Auckland key informants working in regulatory roles favoured softer compliance measures that enabled boarding house operators to take action to improve the living environment of their premises, rather than forced closures.

Some of the key informants favoured various systems of registration and licencing as a starting point to effective monitoring, compliance and enforcement. While it is acknowledged that creating a system of registration is challenging within existing legislation, there is potential for councils to establish boarding house registers under the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947*. This could be established on a semi-voluntary basis through information sharing between councils, social services and boarding house

operators. In any case, a complete register of boarding house premises is not currently a feasible proposition due to conflicting boarding house definitions. Licencing of premises and operators were also proposed, but these are suggestions that would require legislative change. Building warrants of fitness were also considered as an option to make landlords more accountable for standards.

A Dunedin key informant suggested that consenting requirements on dwellings used for housing multiple people could be tightened, reducing the permitted number of rooms for commercially rented dwellings. An Auckland key informant suggested that regulation and planning provisions at local government level should be reinforced so that they have the ‘teeth’ of central government regulation on a regional level. In general, key informants were mindful that imposing excessive regulation could have unintended negative effects such as, imposing additional costs on operators that are ultimately passed on to tenants.

6.4.2 Non-Regulatory Suggestions for Improvements

Several of the Auckland based key informants suggested that part of the solution was to create more affordable housing, including single occupancy units although, there is some acknowledgement that achieving supply at the lower end of the market is difficult. The key informants were unable to identify clear ways in which an improved housing supply could be implemented. Other non-regulatory suggestions included a wider role for social service agencies in identifying the issues, and better ways of informing tenants and landlords of rights and obligations under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*. An educative approach rather than an overtly regulatory approach is favoured by some of the respondents with a social service background.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from this study are informed from the results of this research, in particular the suggestions key informants made for both regulatory and non-regulatory improvements. The scope of these recommendations falls short of full legislative change at central government level, as the outcomes of any such suggestions would be speculative and would not currently be able to be implemented. These recommendations focus on what could reasonably be achieved within local government and other organisations with an oversight of boarding house premises and tenants, such as social

service agencies and government departments. The recommendations presented in this section include general suggestions that could be applicable throughout New Zealand, as well as recommendations that are targeted specifically at the case study areas of Auckland and Dunedin. These recommendations are intended to inform territorial authorities about ways to address problems and issues associated with boarding houses, and to encourage improved practises by a range of stakeholders in the boarding house sector.

6.5.1 General Recommendations

Direct recognition of boarding houses within territorial authority plans, using the same definition of boarding houses contained in the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*.

At present boarding houses are seldom directly defined within territorial authority plans. For example, under the Auckland City Council legacy plan, boarding houses are included within a sub-set of premises under the definition of ‘hostel’. Under the Dunedin District Plan, boarding houses are defined as a ‘commercial residential activity’, while under the Dunedin Long Term Plan they are considered ‘visitor accommodation.’ Boarding houses are a unique living environment and those that live within them can have unique needs. Issues can arise from boarding houses that are not prevalent in other accommodation types. The apportioning of resources for regulation, and for initiatives that address the needs of tenants are contingent on boarding houses being defined in an unambiguous manner. For example, implementing proactive measures to inspect boarding house premises are dependent on those premises being adequately defined. Any system of registration is likewise dependent on clear definitions.

The establishment of boarding house registers by territorial authorities using the provisions of the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947*.

At present there is no mandatory legislative requirement for boarding houses to be registered, however Section 21 of the *Housing Improvement Regulations 1947* provides for New Zealand territorial authorities to create and maintain a register. Councils have the power to request information for registers, but due to the weak penalty provisions of the Act, prosecutions for breaches are impractical. Registration could be initiated on a voluntary basis, and could involve the input of stakeholders outside of councils such as, governmental and non-governmental social service agencies. Other benefits of a register can include better sharing of information between operators and councils.

Tenancy Services to work with councils and social service agencies to distribute information to landlords and tenants on the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*, including the rights and obligations they have under The Act.

A clear conclusion that can be drawn from the present research is a lack of understanding of rights and obligations of boarding house tenants and landlords under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*. A better understanding of these provisions would prevent some exploitative practises by landlords, and empower tenants to report exploitative practises to relevant authorities. Better informed landlords would be more likely to ensure that tenants are subject to legitimate tenancy agreements, live in a clean environment, have lockable and safe rooms, are made aware of fire safety and evacuation plans. Social service workers that regularly visit boarding houses and their tenants would be well placed to pass on written information or advice on behalf of tenancy services.

6.5.2 Recommendations Specific to the Auckland Case Study Area

Auckland Council to complete proactive joint regulatory inspections akin to those carried out for the South Auckland Boarding House Project.

The current research indicates that the proactive inspections carried out as part of the South Auckland Boarding Houses project, points to a successful model that could be widely implemented in Auckland on a permanent basis. Under this model, issues could be dealt with collectively by various council departments, government departments and social service workers. The failings of complaint-based compliance and enforcement systems have been demonstrated in this research, but the recent initiatives in South Auckland Boarding proved to be successful at improving the living conditions of boarding houses.

A Memorandum of Understanding for Auckland boarding houses signed between territorial authorities, social service agencies, district health boards, leading non-governmental social services and selected landlords.

This undertaking would be a clear expression of intent among key stakeholders involved in the Auckland boarding house accommodation sector, with a view to the setting of appropriate parameters for the sharing of information and sustained joint initiatives between the council, government departments and non-governmental social service

agencies. Benefits could include the setting of protocols to ensure that breaches of regulations were reported in a timely manner and joint policy initiatives.

Auckland Council to consider ways of facilitating the development of purpose-built, one bedroom affordable rental accommodation.

The provision of affordable single bedroom housing for could potentially reduce demand for boarding houses, and alleviate some of the issues of overcrowding and substandard conditions. This could be achieved by in part by waiving development contributions on projects that provide for this need. Alternatively, the council could work in partnership with housing trusts to provide more of this from of housing or with central government under the provisions of the *Housing Accords and Special Housing Areas Act 2013*. Presently the focus of the Auckland Housing Accord is focused on the construction of homes for families, but one bedroom units could be included in targets for housing construction (Auckland Council, 2015a).

6.5.3 Recommendation Specific to the Dunedin Case Study Area

Dunedin City Council to consider a system of multi-regulatory proactive inspections.

This research established that in comparison to Auckland, Dunedin has few serious issues and problems with boarding houses. The present situation does not necessarily provide grounds for complacency, as serious issues such as fire risks could still exist and may not be brought to the attention of regulatory authorities under a complaint-based system.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a discussion on the research completed for the present study. In doing so it has addressed the research objectives by outlining; characteristics of boarding house tenants, characteristics of the boarding house living environment, the planning and regulatory framework of boarding houses, possible regulatory solutions and non-regulatory solutions to the issues that face boarding houses. The findings from the current research have been compared to the theoretical framework outlined in the Literature Review in Chapter Two.

The first research objective sought to characterise boarding houses in the case study areas of Auckland and Dunedin. Boarding house tenants in both case study areas are identified as being potentially marginalised and vulnerable. Many are transient and exist at the

margins of homelessness, particularly in Auckland. Differences in the case study areas were apparent, particularly in the context of disparity in rent prices and accommodation shortages in Auckland. Families domiciled in boarding houses are a prominent concern in the Auckland case study area. There are also some marked contrasts in perceptions of landlords. In Dunedin landlords are generally well regarded, while the research in Auckland indicated that opinions of landlords varied. Building standards are also highly variable in the Auckland Case study area.

The second objective addresses the planning and regulatory framework in which boarding houses operate. For the most part, the boarding house sector within the case study areas is described as having minimal regulation. Comparisons with international examples of planning and regulatory frameworks for boarding houses support the notion that regulation of boarding houses in New Zealand is minimal.

The third and fourth objectives sought suggestions for regulatory and non-regulatory changes to the ways that boarding houses are provided. Among a range of suggestions, improved building standards, better monitoring of premises and proactive systems of enforcement featured prominently. While recommendations for non-regulatory changes included better education, better understanding of tenant rights and a wider role for social service agencies. The key informants' suggestions for regulatory and non-regulatory improvements informed the recommendations in this chapter.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to identify problems and issues that characterise private boarding houses in New Zealand, to examine how they are being addressed through planning and regulation, and to inform changes to improve the living environment of boarding houses. This research provided an in-depth examination of boarding houses in New Zealand. It characterises tenants and boarding house premises within the case study areas of Auckland and Dunedin. The planning and regulatory framework in which boarding houses exist has been examined. These findings have been compared to examples from international literature. Recommendations based on the research findings for improving the ways that boarding houses are provided for have been compiled.

7.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify problems arising from the living environment of private boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland.
2. To determine how private boarding houses are being provided for under the existing planning framework.
3. To identify possible regulatory changes that could improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.
4. To identify possible non-regulatory measures to improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.

The first research objective sought to identify problems and issues with boarding houses in New Zealand. The focus of this objective was two-fold, and included the characteristics of boarding house tenants and the characteristics of the boarding house living environment. This objective was achieved through primary research based on the key informants' knowledge, observations and experiences, and secondary research in the form of a review of international literature. Comparisons were able to be drawn between the findings of the primary research with the findings from the literature review.

The second research objective was achieved through discovering the key informants' perceptions and opinions of the planning and regulatory framework under which boarding houses operate. These findings were able to be compared to an examination of the regulatory and legislative framework, and to international examples of planning and regulatory frameworks outlined in the literature review.

The third research objective sought to identify regulatory solutions to address the issues and problems arising from boarding houses. The social complexities of boarding houses made it necessary to look beyond land use planning and regulation, so a fourth objective of identifying non-regulatory solutions was included. The third and fourth objectives were achieved by obtaining suggestions of professional key informants. These suggestions have informed the recommendations in the previous chapter.

7.3 KEY FINDINGS

7.3.1 Boarding House Tenants

The research from this study suggests that boarding house tenants are often people with limited accommodation choices, and vulnerabilities that can be compounded by the boarding house living environment. The theoretical framework for this research identified some key themes that characterise boarding house tenants. Mental illness, transience, physical health concerns, addiction, a history of criminal behaviour and gender issues are the dominant and recurring themes in literature relating to boarding house tenants. The primary research revealed that the same characteristics were prevalent among boarding house tenants in the case study areas of Auckland and Dunedin. The multifaceted and interrelated nature of these factors, and the manner in which they could be impacted on by the living environment was well recognised by the respondents in the primary research.

The role of boarding houses can go beyond merely providing accommodation for the marginalised and vulnerable. In Auckland where housing choice can be limited by housing market conditions, boarding houses cater for a broad range of tenants including, students, the working poor and families. A housing supply shortage in Auckland can make accessing boarding houses difficult for some marginalised tenants and imposes challenges on the social service workers responsible for assisting them into accommodation. At worst, the vulnerable and hard to house in Auckland can be faced

with complete homelessness. Families living in boarding houses were at the forefront of issues and concerns identified by Auckland key informants although, this situation did not feature prominently in international literature.

Tenants in Dunedin tended to maintain lengthy tenancies, and exercised elements of choice in accessing boarding house accommodation. While all tenants participating in the research identified affordability as a reason for living in a boarding house, convenience and companionship also featured.

7.3.2 The Boarding House Living Environment

The findings of the literature review suggested that boarding houses generally exist at the lower end of the rental market, and that poor living conditions can be detrimental to the wellbeing of tenants. The living environment of Auckland boarding houses were reported in this research as having standards that were variable. At worst, there were examples presented of premises that were unsafe, unsanitary, overcrowded and with facilities of a very low quality. In Dunedin, respondents in the primary research were generally satisfied with the condition of boarding house premises.

Literature describes the role of landlords and managers as impacting significantly on the living environment of boarding houses and being crucial to the wellbeing of tenants. The primary research found that perceptions of landlords in Auckland were mixed. Concerns were raised about exploitative practises and a general disregard for standards and regulations by some landlords. By comparison, landlords in Dunedin are highly regarded by tenants and by social service workers in both government and non-governmental roles. It was suggested that they provided a level of support for their tenants that went beyond what was expected of them.

7.3.3 The Planning and Regulatory Framework

New Zealand processes of compliance and enforcement are largely complaint-based and there are few examples of proactive initiatives. Current legislation provides for soft measures rather than ridged mechanisms of enforcement. The efficacy of complaint-based processes are limited by an unwillingness of tenants or other stakeholders, such as social service workers to make complaints. The proactive approach that has recently been undertaken in South Auckland by the Auckland Council is a notable exception. However, this project however is a pilot study and it is uncertain if these initiatives will be sustained

into the future. International literature on boarding houses abounds with cautionary tales pointing to the risks of ineffective regulation, with the worst case scenarios being mass casualty fires. Proactive processes of enforcement are considered in the literature to deliver far better living environment outcomes for tenants of boarding houses, a contention overwhelmingly supported by the primary research in both case study areas.

7.4 REFLECTION ON RESEARCH METHODS

The methods employed for this study were successfully guided by the research objectives. A wide range of findings were attained from the primary research and comparisons were able to be made with the findings from a robust theoretical framework. However, due to time constraints, the input of boarding house landlords and tenants was only able to be obtained in the Dunedin case study area. The primary research completed in the Auckland case study area was valuable, but was limited to interviews with professional key informants. The research could have benefited from more consistency between the two case study areas in the methods employed.

7.5 OPTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Studio rooms are a relatively new and under-researched housing form that is relatively unique to the student area of Dunedin. There are parallels between studio rooms and the potentially problematic suburban rooming houses that are proliferating in suburban Melbourne. Under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986*, studio rooms can be treated as boarding houses, raising issues over the legitimacy of fixed tenancies in these premises.

Boarding houses in New Zealand are poorly defined under central government legislation and local authority provisions, therefore there are challenges in monitoring them. Research on improved ways of defining and counting boarding houses could be of value within a planning context and could help inform future policy.

The implications of families living in boarding houses in Auckland is an area that could certainly benefit from more research. Concerns about the impacts of boarding house life on children featured prominently in the results of this study, and there is a scarcity of research internationally on this phenomenon.

7.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Private boarding houses in New Zealand fulfil a need by providing an affordable form of single room occupancy accommodation for a variety of tenant types. International studies suggest that the living environment of boarding houses can have detrimental outcomes for vulnerable and marginalised tenants. This study has identified problems and issues that characterise private boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland and has obtained suggestions for changes that have been incorporated into recommendations. This research largely validates the findings of those international studies. Presently there is minimal regulation of boarding houses in New Zealand. It is imperative that changes should be made to the planning and regulatory framework in which boarding houses exist to improve the living environment and wellbeing of tenants.

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Building Regulations 2004

Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Act, 2006

Health Act 1956

Housing Accords and Special Housing Areas Act 2012

Housing Improvement Regulations 1947

Local Government act 1991

Parole Act 2002

Residential Tenancies Act 1986

Resource Mangement Act 1991

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Key Informant Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your involvement and experience with private boarding houses?
2. From your experience what issues and problems can you identify that characterise boarding house tenants, and the boarding house living environment?
3. How well do you think boarding houses in your area are being provided for and managed under planning and regulatory provisions?
4. What regulatory changes do you suggest could be made to improve the way in which boarding houses are provided for?
5. What non-regulatory options could be considered to improve the way that boarding houses are provided for?

APPENDIX B: BOARDING HOUSE RESIDENTS SURVEY

1. How long have you lived in the boarding house you are in at present?

- ☐ Less than one month ☐ Between one month and one year ☐ More than one year

2. Where else have you lived in in the last 5 years? (Tick more than one box if applicable)

- ☐ Private House/Flat/ Apartment ☐ Housing New Zealand or community housing ☐ Other boarding houses
- ☐ Supported Accommodation ☐ Homeless / Emergency Housing / Night shelter ☐ Prison
- ☐ Camping Ground ☐ Hospital / Institution ☐ Other accommodation type

3. Why do you live in the boarding house? (Tick more than one box if applicable)

- ☐ It is affordable ☐ It is convenient
- ☐ For companionship ☐ Other

4. How safe do you feel in the boarding house?

- ☐ Very safe ☐ Neutral ☐ Very Unsafe
- ☐ Safe ☐ Unsafe

5. How do you rate the condition of the building?

- ☐ Very good ☐ Neutral ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Good ☐ Poor

6. How clean is the boarding house?

- ☐ Very clean ☐ Neutral ☐ Very dirty
- ☐ Clean ☐ Dirty

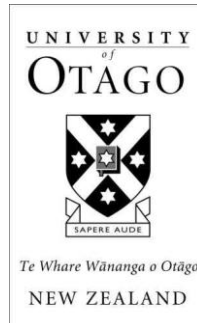
7. How do you rate the facilities provided in the boarding house?

- ☐ Very good ☐ Neutral ☐ Very Poor
- ☐ Good ☐ Poor

8. Do you feel comfortable speaking to the landlord or manager about problems with the boarding house or other tenants?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

APPENDIX C: INFORMATION AND CONSENT SHEETS



Planning considerations for private boarding houses

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (Key Informants)

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project? Aim and description of project

The aim of the research is to assess how private boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland are being managed, with a view to informing possible planning changes and improvements.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To identify problems arising from the living environment of private sector boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland.
2. To undertake a review of current plans and policies relating to private sector boarding houses.
3. To identify possible regulatory changes that could improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.
4. To identify possible non-regulatory measures to improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

The participants of the study include boarding house tenants from boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland, landlords of boarding houses, boarding house managers, social service agency and housing advocacy staff, staff from regulatory authorities and council planners. Participants have been sought through contact by phone and email. The participants have been chosen because of their particular knowledge, experience, expertise, and insights into the boarding houses and associated issues. About 28-30 participants will be included in the research.

What will Participants be asked to do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview. During the course of the interview, questions relating to the research topic will be asked of participants. The interview is expected to take no longer than 30 minutes. If at any stage you feel uncomfortable, you may decline to answer any question, or request that the interview be terminated. The information gathered from the research will be available to participants on request. Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

The data collected is expected to be based on the professional knowledge and opinions of the interview participants, and will be obtained through a series of open-ended questions. No personal details or commercially or politically sensitive detail are sought. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed as required at a later stage. Only those directly involved in completing the research and their supervisors will have access to the audio recordings and transcriptions.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. Any personal information held on the participants will be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will, in most cases, be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely.

The results of the project will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. On the Consent Form, you will be given options regarding your anonymity. Please be aware that we will make every attempt to preserve your anonymity. However, with your consent, there are some cases where it would be

preferable to attribute contributions made to individual participants. It is absolutely up to you which of these options you prefer.

This interview comprises a series of open-ended questions. The questions are aligned with the identification of problems and issues with boarding houses, the manner in which they are regulated and ways in which the management of boarding houses could be improved. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s).

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If

you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Tim Anderson and
Department of Geography

Rosalind Day-Cleavin
Department of Geography

(03)4794216

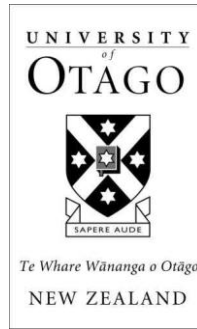
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andti949@student.otago.ac.nz

Rosalind.day-cleavin@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

[Reference Number: *as allocated upon approval by the Human Ethics Committee*]



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRIVATE BOARDING HOUSES
INFORMATION SHEET FOR
PARTICIPANTS (Boarding house tenants)

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project? Aim and description of project

The aim of the research is to assess how private boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland are being managed, with a view to informing possible planning changes and improvements.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To identify problems arising from the living environment of private sector boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland.
2. To undertake a review of current plans and policies relating to private sector boarding houses.
3. To identify possible regulatory changes that could improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.
4. To identify possible non-regulatory measures to improve the way that private boarding houses are being provided for.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

The participants of the study include boarding house tenants from boarding houses in Dunedin and Auckland, landlords of boarding houses, boarding house managers, social service agency and housing advocacy staff, staff from regulatory authorities and council planners. Participants have been sought through contact by phone and email. The participants have been chosen because of their particular knowledge, experiences, and insights into the boarding houses and associated issues. About 28-30 participants will be included in the research.

What will Participants be asked to do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to participate in an interview, comprising a number of survey questions and some open-ended questions enabling you to make further comments. The interview is expected to take no longer than 15 minutes. If at any stage you feel uncomfortable, you may decline to answer any question, or request that the interview be terminated. The information gathered from the research will be available to participants on request. Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

The data collected is expected to be based on the knowledge, opinions and experiences of the interview participants. No personal details or commercially or politically sensitive detail are sought. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed as required at a later stage. Only those directly involved in completing the research and their supervisors will have access to the audio recordings and transcriptions.

The data collected will be securely stored under password protection in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. Any personal information held on the participants will be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will, in most cases, be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely.

The results of the project will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. On the Consent Form, you will be given options regarding your anonymity. Please be aware that we will make every attempt to preserve your anonymity. However, with your consent, there are some cases where it would be preferable to attribute contributions made to individual participants. It is absolutely up to you which of these options you prefer.

This interview comprises a series of structured survey style questions, as well as some open-ended questions. The purpose of the interview is to obtain your information from your perspective on your experiences living in a boarding house. In the event that the nature of the questions make you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s).

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Tim Anderson
Department of Geography

and

Rosalind Day-Cleavin
Department of Geography

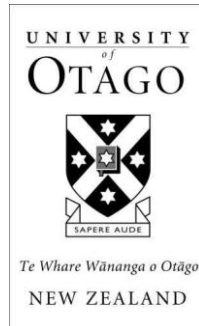
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PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRIVATE BOARDING HOUSES
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS
(KEY INFORMANTS)

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information such as audio recordings and interview transcripts may be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;
4. This interview involves a series of open ended questions. The questions will be aligned with problems and issues that characterise boarding houses, the manner in which they are regulated, and ways in which the management of boarding houses could be improved. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to

answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

6. I, as the participant: a) agree to being named in the research,

☐

- b) would rather remain anonymous

☐

I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed Name)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.